

Dear Parents

Though the weather seems determined to prove otherwise, we are still in the last throes of Summer, but the new term is just starting. This time of year is always exciting, as the boys return with tales to tell of holiday exploits and new friendships are made as the school community reforms. This year we will have another 128 boys joining Year 7 from junior schools and around 155 boys will start Year 12. New uniform abounds, new routines are there to be experienced and learned and a huge range of opportunities beckon. If we can build on some excellent results from the Summer exams and the boys go on to achieve wonderful things again this year, then 2015–2016 will be an academic year to remember...

We have a number of staffing changes ready for the new school year. The full staff list is available on the school website, but here is a summary list of the teaching colleagues who will join BWS this September:

- Mrs A Gough (Mathematics)
- Mr A Griffin-Raphael (Chemistry)
- Mrs J Hind (p/t Music)
- Mrs F Jones (p/t Geography)
- Mr M Taylor (p/t Design Technology)
- Mrs O Williams (English)

In addition there are some existing teachers whose responsibilities are changing, as follows:

- Mr J Beal (Teacher i/c DT)
- Mr T Churchill (Assistant Head of Lower School)
- Miss N Steer (Head of RS)
- Snr J Torres (Head of Spanish)

The start of the school year is a very important time for all of the staff and your boys, because it is now that expectations are established, patterns of working are set in place and thus the year is set up to be a success. We will do our very best to ensure that you know what is going on in school, through regular updates on the website and also the full use of the calendar at www.bws-school.org.uk. Though the website underwent a complete restructuring at about this time last year, the single biggest and most exciting change was probably the launch of the School Twitter Feeds, all of which can be readily accessed via the 'News and Twitter Updates' button on the home page of the website (you do not need to have a Twitter account to do this). You should find that main Twitter Feed loads automatically down the side of the page when you access the website, but please do take the time to browse the other 30+ feeds, as they really do give a vivid impression of the school as an organic entity. The feeds are regularly updated with news and activities, and they are also used to give reminders and study related info for the students. One of the important things that Twitter does is to help close the gap between parents and the school, which is always going to be a fact of life at secondary level. Using the Twitter feeds really does tell you and show you what the boys are getting up to, both in Salisbury and when they are travelling too. In addition, any urgent updates regarding school arrangements, events or emergency planning will be posted on the main school twitter feed for your attention.

Other communications from school will come home via email, which tends to be a little more reliable and punctual than the teenage messenger service! Please do ensure that we have **your up-to-date contact details**, both email and also home/mobile contact numbers. It can be very worrying for all concerned if, on the rare occasions that we need to contact you urgently, we find that the details that we have are redundant...

Can I remind you of a couple of routine but really important things at the start of the new school year? Firstly (and I know that this is one of those horrible niggly jobs that is all-too-easy to put off!) can you please ensure that you have **named all of your son's clothing/kit/personal belongings**? We take a fairly strict line with lost items – if they are named then they generally get straight back to their owner (if he can be enticed to collect them from Reception that is...!). If they are un-named then they are retained at Reception for a couple of weeks and then disposed of if not collected; we now have a clothing bank on the school site which will be the destination for all unclaimed clothing that does not go to the School Shop. You are very welcome to send in unwanted clothes and shoes for your son to deposit in the bank, as this will earn money for the school too. Secondly, can I re-emphasise the importance of the Homework Diary for **ALL** boys in Years 7-11. Many boys in the Sixth Form also use these planners, and the key point is that if the Homework Diary is used reliably and well, then the remainder of school life usually slots into place. Organisation is a great thing to aim for, especially with boys. Sadly I do not trust electronic notebooks for this purpose – they simply do not do the job and seem to be a ready excuse either to 'mislay' homework or to prevaricate. We expect all boys to note down and then do their homework to a good standard in their diaries (so that you can get the gist of what has been set) and then it can be handed in on time. You need to do your bit please by checking and signing his completed homework diary entries each week, and his Form Tutor will do the same, a simple but robust system. By the way if 'none set' seems to be the default entry or (even worse) the diary seems to be suspiciously thin or even blank then please do contact your son's Form Tutor so that s/he can follow matters up.

Finally, could I remind you of the Parents' Rough Guide which can be found on the website (via the Index)? This was drawn up with the help of parents and so hopefully answers many of the questions that arise on a day-to-day basis both at school and at home. If, however, you wish to raise any other issue then please do contact me or a member of my senior staff – our contact details are on the website – or come in to one of my 'open door' sessions which will be publicised in due course. You do not need an appointment for the latter. The email contact details for each of the Heads of the Subject Departments are also posted on the relevant pages of the website. Academic concerns should be directed in the first instance to the Head of Department, whereas issues of a pastoral nature can be highlighted for either your son's Form Tutor or the relevant Head of Pastoral Section.

An exciting year awaits, and we will do all that we can to get your boy(s) to do their very best. I look forward to meeting you at one of the forthcoming school events in 2015–2016.

Best wishes

S D Smallwood
Head Master