



28th November 2008

Dear Parent / Guardian

I inherited the idea of a weekly newsletter and I'm sorry to have let it slip. There aren't many occasions to meet parents, a little to my surprise, and we must do something about that, though it will have an impact on your busy lives. We are planning a series of meals for parents and staff in Mondos, guest nights in Common Room, and even, now I've got some furniture, in the Headmaster's house. We have already started a series of food evenings there, with girls and boys queuing to cook a proper dinner for their friends (and for me!) in the Headmaster's house.

Term dates : the dates for 2009 Lent and Summer terms will remain as printed. Next term will begin on Tuesday 6th January (boarders return on the Monday evening). Please try to avoid making holiday arrangements which eat into term time : our academic courses are carefully planned and unplanned interruptions are not easy to manage. The 2009-10 dates are being prepared. We have a one week break from Friday 24th October to Sunday 31st October and term will finish on Thursday 10th December 2009. Since we are not doing AS modules in January 2010 the Lent term will start on Monday January 11th. Children need a longer holiday in the middle of winter and I'm sorry we can't arrange it for this Christmas.

Innovations involving clothing always provoke strong reaction, though my proposal is a very modest one. The terrible weather, and especially the horizontal rain, which we encounter frequently, and the fact that this is a large site where children walk vast distances each day, have led me to suggest there ought to be a trouser option for girls in Years 7 – 13. It is an option; many girls will not want to wear them; and they will be of a specific type to be provided, surprisingly cheaply, in the school shop. Rossall pupils actually look smarter than pupils at any other school I know, and we wouldn't want that reputation to slip. But it seems a sensible concession to make.

In an effort to grab a few hours of daylight for outdoor activities in January and February we are considering a winter timetable (afternoon lessons starting at 3:45 rather than 1:45). I am struck by how little time pupils are not in lessons when there is daylight. This would mean formal schooling would finish at about 5.15 on two days a week, probably Wednesday and Friday. Some children may, of course, have arranged private out of school events at this time : gymnastics, piano lessons. **If we were to introduce this change in January 2009, I really need to know very promptly if there are any private arrangements which would be affected.**

I'm off to Hong Kong and Beijing this week but plan to be back for the school play in early December (A Midsummer Night's Dream, 4th, 5th, 6th December) and then running up to the Christmas festivities. I do hope to meet more parents now that I'm properly installed and I'm always happy to hear from parents about anything to do with our strange and wonderful school. Other news from the term will come in my next letter, though it's good to report a fine victory by our first XV over Arnold under floodlights on Tuesday.

Best wishes
Yours sincerely

Dr Stephen Winkley
Headmaster