



HEADTEACHER'S NEWSLETTER

October 2012

Dear All

As yet another busy and exciting term draws to a close I am writing to you to bring you news of what has been going on at Hitchin Boys' School.

Amongst other things in the attached you will find details about:

- Survey regarding selection policy for school trips – please email your response to admin@hbs.herts.sch.uk or return the paper copy to the School Office. Deadline 14 December 2012.
- Announcements of upcoming events.
- Calendar for the next half-term.

I would like to take this opportunity to draw your attention to the excellent exam results achieved this summer by last year's Year 11. 85% A*-C at GCSE including English and maths puts us amongst the highest performing schools in the country and is a testament to the hard work put in by staff, parents and of course the boys themselves. Congratulations to all!

Please do not hesitate to contact me directly if you have any queries, concerns, worries or issues.

I wish you all a restful half-term break.

Yours faithfully

M Brown
Headteacher



GREAT NEWS

Pipes of Glory

Alex Hawkins, playing with the University of Bedfordshire Pipe Band, won the All-England Pipe Band Championships once again yesterday. The band actually improved on last year's win as the competition is in two parts, a marches section and an MSR (March, Strathspey and Reel), and this year they won both parts (they were 1st and 2nd last year). Also, last month they participated in the World Championships in Glasgow, the first time Alex has participated. They finished in 5th place in their grade, beating all English and all Scottish bands in the process. A magnificent achievement for his first attempt. As a result of this year's success, the band will almost certainly be promoted to a higher grade next year, so it is unlikely that they will be able to repeat the successes that they have had this year. But they'll certainly be giving it a go! Congratulations to Alex and his teammates.

Yes we Kwan!

Tom McNeilley competed recently in the Tae Kwan Do Federation World Championships in Canada. Tom was competing as a member of the Junior Male England team. He fought extremely well and achieved Silver in the power event. Tom has been training in Tae Kwan Do for nine years now and for several years that has involved four sessions in Hitchin every week plus every Saturday travelling to Bristol for high level training. In the end however, as Tom has said "All the hard work paid off" and now he is aiming for the Olympics. Congratulations to Tom.

Exams

Year 11 and Sixth Form individual January exam timetables have now been released. Please check them carefully: name, DOB, list of exams and levels. Report any errors to Mrs Berry in S7 as soon as possible.

Trampoline Competition

Hitchin Boys' School Sports Centre will host the Schools Regional Trampoline Competition on Sunday 9 December; this will be open to all schools in the Eastern Region. Sprung Loaded Trampoline Club will organise the event and our Head Coach will enter any of our students wishing to compete for Hitchin Boys' School. If any boys are interested please see Mr Mussino or a member of PE Staff during the school day.

CHANGING ROOM SECURITY REMINDER FOR ALL PUPILS

A reminder to all pupils that if they have anything of value in their possession during a Games lesson to hand them into a member of the PE staff or to not bring it to school at all.

ONE WAY SYSTEM MATHS TOP CORRIDOR

In the interests of safety we have decided to introduce a one-way system from the Maths top corridor rooms 24 and 25. Boys should only leave and approach those rooms via the Hall stairwell. This is to relieve pressure on the MFL/Art stairwell at the other end.

Staff will remind boys leaving 24 and 25 to turn right and go down the Hall stairwell.

PARENT-SPECIFIC ANNOUNCEMENTS

Trips survey:

Please see the survey at the end of this newsletter.



In-Depth Survey:

We have contracted with a specialist research company to carry out an in-depth study of student, parent and staff attitudes towards and perceptions of Hitchin Boys' School. GL Performance are the market leader in school stakeholder surveys and have been used by over half the schools in the country. Staff and students will be able to complete an online survey. Parents will be asked to complete a paper copy.

We have decided to carry out this in-depth data analysis exercise as an addition to our usual surveys since GL Performance are able to provide national comparisons both with all schools and with similar schools. This will enable us all – staff, parents and students - to continue to monitor our strengths and help us address any areas for development.

ParentMail 2

ParentMail 2 is now fully operational with approximately 70% of parents signed up to receive school emails via the system. We use ParentMail 2 to send copies of letters or important messages straight to parents' email addresses. If you are worried about letters not making their way home, please sign up to ParentMail 2.

It only takes a minute and all you need is a code to register for the system. If you would like to sign up, please email chope@hbs.herts.sch.uk and your code and full instructions will be sent to your email address.

Parent Governor Election

There were three vacancies as a result of parents reaching the end of their allotted 4-year terms and eight parents stood. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them all for putting themselves forward to participate in the Governance of the school. The strategic overview and support provided by the Governing Body is a vital element in the Leadership and Management of an outstanding school. The three parents elected as a result of having the highest number of votes were as follows:

Paul Hooper
John Turney
Ginny Wilson

Parents' Society

We have some fun Parent Society organised events coming up:

- Thursday 29 November - Bingham String Quartet
- April 2013 (tbc) - Quiz Night
- Saturday 6 July 2013 - Summer Ball

ALL ARE WELCOME!

Many thanks once again to the parents' society for all the hard work they put in to raising funds. In the school year 2011-2012 the Parents' Society were able to raise over £ 9,000 which is a fantastic result. All of this money goes towards enhancing the equipment, facilities and resources we are able to provide for the boys. The new minibus and training took a mammoth effort but the Society are not resting on their laurels and have already made available funds for improving computing facilities in the Science block. We are now discussing the possibility of funding new seating areas outside for the boys to use at break and lunchtimes. Departments have also been invited to make a bid to the Parents Society for funds to support specific projects.



Specific things you can do as a parent to help:

- Be a volunteer to help out.
- Come along to the committee meetings – your ideas are welcomed and valued.
- Buy (and sell) as many raffle tickets as you can in the upcoming Christmas Raffle.

Contact the Chair of the Parents' Society via the Learning Platform here:

<http://www.school-portal.co.uk/GroupHomepage.asp?GroupID=82114>

Christmas Raffle: Raffle tickets will be coming home soon. Please purchase as many as you can to help support the Parents' Society raise funds for the school. As usual we will run a Raffle Ticket Competition for the boys to encourage them to sell as many as possible.

Prizes will be awarded to: A) The Form which sells the most tickets.
 B) The individual boy who sells the most tickets.

Prizes:

- 1) A "jump the queue" card for the canteen for every member of the form.
- 2) A book token or iTunes music voucher – for the boy selling the most tickets.

If sales reach less than £ 2,000	Voucher = £10	Jump the queue = 5 days
If sales exceed £ 2,000	Voucher = £15	Jump the queue = 5 days
If sales reach £ 3,000	Voucher = £25	Jump the queue = 10 days

To ensure you get the chance to win make sure you return the ticket stubs in an envelope with your name and tutor group clearly marked. The number of tickets sold will be recorded by the Parents' Society. The Parents' Society will make the decision as to who wins the prizes.

Personal Social Health and Enterprise Education (PSHEE)

Our PSHEE programme is one of the many ways we try to promote the Spiritual, Social, Moral and Cultural Development of the boys. The programme involves regular timetabled lessons during the school day, the 25 minutes every morning in Tutor Time, the Assembly Programme and often additional events which might involve workshops, drama productions and other experiences for the boys.

Business Mentors

We are in discussions with Tilehouse Rotary Club to organise Business Mentors who we hope will work with a number of boys in Year 10 to provide an additional source of adult expertise in the area of life choices.

Drugs Information Evening

Mr Hanahoe is PSHEE Co-ordinator and has organised a speaker for the evening of 22 November to talk about drugs to parents. The presentation will be on 'Does my child know more than me?'

The evening will start at 7pm and will be held in the Sixth Form Centre. Letters will go out the first week after half-term. This event has been timed to coincide with the drugs awareness workshops in which the boys will be taking part.



Online Safety

As part of our PSHEE programme we also focus on online safety and anti-bullying to educate our students about the issues involved and how to deal with them should they encounter them, in our attempt to equip them with life skills.

Our thrust this year is on cyber bullying as we are aware of how the impact that such activities out of school can become an issue here in school.

As part of our programme we are organising an evening on what parents can do to ensure online safety. The evening will be for parents who may want to keep abreast of the issues and explore and share ways in which you can help your son to keep safe when using electronic social networking systems.

This will be held on Wednesday 21 November 7-8.30pm in our 6th Form Centre. A letter will be sent out shortly.

Extra-Curricular Activities

- Film Society Meets Thursday 12.45 in J10
- Debating Society Meets Friday 12.45 in J10
- Photography (Year 7) Wednesday lunchtime starting after half-term with An.
- Set design (All year groups) Wednesday lunchtime with Ad.
- Year 10/11 workshop Thursday lunchtime with Ad

Assembly Programme

Our Assembly programme is a vital part of our PSHEE and the following is just an example of some of the wide and varied content experienced so far this half-term by years 7, 8 and 9.

New beginnings! A fresh start.
Olympics success – anyone can do it, even you.
Olympics – a celebration of both Games
Expectations in Year 7
Olympics - everyone has the capacity to succeed
Expectations in Year 8
Use all of your 5 senses
Expectations in Year 9
Jeans for Genes Day
Olympics – Inspiration and Determination
Don't judge people too quickly
The importance of good friendships
Get involved and meet new people
How you carry yourself is important
Astronomy - Keeping everything in perspective
Ask for help – you don't know it all!
Air Cadets Information & Recruitment
Music assembly – 3 performances
Owning up to mistakes – 3 examples in the news
Fireworks and Halloween safety
HBS Gifted & Talented Sport programme



Departments:

Art The Art department are taking part in 'The Big Draw' this week when all students will take part in activities run by the Art department throughout the week.

Geography - Year 8 Barton Field Trip – Mr Streets writes: The annual Geography field trip took place in early October. We spent a morning in the Barton Hills National Nature Reserve, Bedfordshire, to discover more about conservation issues in this special area of chalk grassland and how vital it is to keep to the Countryside Code. Students also studied the differences in landscape, soils and land use between the clay valley and the chalk hills. They also learnt why the spring occurs there and how important this feature has been to the development of the village of Barton-le-Clay. This work has enhanced their fieldwork and map skills this term.

In a follow-up questionnaire completed by 130 students, over 99% of respondents said their lessons before the trip prepared them well, over 98% said they enjoyed the trip and learnt a lot from it and over 99% said they now have a better appreciation of the importance of such conservation areas in the local area. Thanks to all staff who participated.

History – Mr Philippou writes: A visiting speaker, who was also the guide on the Year 9 Battlefields tour, came into to take our Year 9 Assembly on the weapons and life for soldiers in the First World War. All students involved got to see how the soldiers really lived, the conditions, the reality of war and weapons and actually got the opportunity to handle the weapons in smaller groups.

Sixty of our Year 9 students recently went on a WW1 Battlefields tour of Belgium and France, looking at how the soldiers lived, fought and the retracing step by step the key movements of the Allied forces during the First World War. The boys represented our school at the Menin Gate where they were part of a memorial wreath laying ceremony and paid their respects on behalf of the school.

MFL – Mr Simms writes: The European day of Languages was celebrated by both staff and boys in early October. Our traditional tri-lingual Assembly was held and we heard a variety of languages spoken including two new ones we had not heard before (Bulgarian and Lithuanian). During lessons, boys took part in a Eurovision Song Contest, a factual quiz on Europe and produced a piece of work demonstrating the importance of learning a second language. Finally we had a record turn out for the cooking competition. Mrs Kavanagh, our Head of Food Technology, Mr Philippou, a former London chef of high renown, Mr Pugh, a well known food expert, joined me in tasting over 20 European dishes. With some difficulty, we decided on the following result.

- 5th Ben Wetherill 9Pn - Pear Brioche
- 4th Jagraai Takhar 7Cv - Cheesecake
- 3rd Danny Mulley 7Br - Tortilla
- 2nd Rory McPhee 7Br and Monty McPhee 9Fs - Haggis and Neeps
- 1st Connor Every 7So - Lasagne

My sincere thanks to all who took part.



Music – Ms Hetherington writes:

Music is off to a flying start this year, with more students than ever taking part in our extra-curricular activities. Our ensembles are busy preparing for their first concert of the year and rehearsals are underway for this year's show, Sweeney Todd, which will take place in February. It is not too late to join in with any of these activities, so all interested students should talk to Ms Hetherington as soon as possible.

We do have places available for more students to take individual instrumental lessons and we have a number of school instruments available for loan to those who wish to try lessons without committing themselves to buying an instrument just yet. Anybody who is interested should contact Ms Hetherington or Mrs White, in the Music Department.

The Music Departments of the three consortium schools ran our first A level music conference this half-term, where all Year 12 and Year 13 musicians spent a day working intensively on advanced musical skills and techniques. We were pleased to welcome two guest speakers; Ross Sharkey, an experienced professional performer, gave an inspirational workshop on performance skills and techniques and Danny Basford, successful composer and past student of HBS, led a composition class. Students also worked on their study skills with teachers from the schools. The whole day was a real success and we are considering opening it up to students from other schools in the future.

Future events include our Autumn Concert on Wednesday 14 November, a Soloists' Recital on Wednesday 5 December and the Carol Service on Monday 17 December.

Sports News: Mr McPherson writes:

Rugby: The season has started in earnest now with the fixture list into full flight. All age groups are running an A & B team and numbers at training are at an all-time high with players competing with enthusiasm and commitment. Special mention must go to the senior squad whose numbers have grown to allow the selection of a regular 1st XV and 2nd XV. This feat is even more remarkable, as last year we were unable to field a senior team due to lack of numbers.

Many players are at present going through the selection process for the different age groups enabling players to represent Hertfordshire. The school wishes all these players good luck in these trials.

Swimming: Congratulations to the junior relay swimming team of Luke Turley, Alex Evens, Sam Gamble and George Rodger. After a long night at Woodside pool the junior team achieved the required times to qualify for both relays in the National Secondary Schools Relay Championships on Saturday 24 November 2012.

The finishing times from the evening qualified Hitchin Boys' School in 16th place for the freestyle relay and 7th place for the medley relay. This is a tremendous achievement and is the first time that the school has ever qualified for a National Schools Final in swimming.

The gala will be held at Coventry Sports Centre with a 1.30pm warm-up.

STOP PRESS!!! Indoor Athletics - Congratulations to the Inter Boys' athletics team of Max Schopp, Kim Sobotie, Dominic Stevens, Sinclair Stewart, Kyann Strachan, Josh Stallard and Tim Clifford for retaining the Lee Valley Indoor Athletics Trophy that they won as juniors in Year 9



Calendar Nov – Dec 2012

November	
6th	Senior Maths Challenge
	Remembrance Day Assembly Year 7/8
	Governors' Main Board
	February Half Term Ski Trip meeting
8th	Remembrance Day Assembly Year 9/10
	Year 13 Consultation Evening
	Governors' Student Conduct & Welfare Committee
9th	Remembrance Day Assembly Year 11/12/13
12th – 15th	Year 11 MFL Speaking Assessment 2
12th	Year 11 Apprenticeship Roadshow
13th	Governors' Chairs' Steering Group
14th	Autumn Concert
15th	Year 9 Consultation Evening
20th	Year 12 Consultation Evening
21st – 23rd	Year 11 Mock Exams
21st	Outside speaker: Business Studies (Years 10 - 13)
22nd	AS Politics Conference
27th	Year 11 Writing Assessment 2
29th	HBS Parents' Society Concert: Christmas with the Bingham Quartet
29th	AS History Conference
30th	Year 9 Careers 'Opt Into Learning' presentation
December	
4th – 5th	Year 11 mock Art exams
5th	Soloists' Winter Recital
7th	Lower School Disco
13th	Celebration Evening
17th	Carol Service at St Mary's
18th	School Carol Services
21st	End of term



Dear Parents

Parent Consultation regarding selection policy for School Trips

In the Academic Year 2011-12 we ran over 20 school trips. These were all successful and productive educational experiences. However many of them were also oversubscribed. There are physical limits to the numbers which can be accommodated on trips and as such in certain circumstances it is not possible to take every boy who would like to attend. However we want to give as many boys as possible the opportunity to participate. We would therefore like to consult with parents regarding the process for selection when a trip is oversubscribed. We would be grateful if you would consider the following proposals and indicate your preference.

When organising a trip which of the following principles should apply:

- a) Cancel a trip if it is not possible to take everyone who wants to go;
- b) Operate a “first-come-first-served” policy for who gets on to a trip;
- c) Operate a straightforward “lottery” for every oversubscribed trip;
- d) Operate a modified “lottery” whereby a failure to obtain a place in one lottery entitles the boy to a guaranteed place on the next oversubscribed trip.

NB Whichever option is taken we reserve the right to not take boys on trips if their behaviour and attitude to school is not sufficiently diligent. Thankfully this has happened very, very rarely.

If a trip is oversubscribed and whatever the option decided on, we will of course create a waiting list from those who were not allocated a place – if a place becomes available we will draw names from those on the waiting list.

Your opinion is valued – please take the time to respond.

Yours faithfully

M Brown

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Name of Boy:.....Form.....

Preferred option (tick one only)

- a []
- b []
- c []
- d []

Signature of parent:.....

Please email your response to admin@hbs.herts.sch.uk or return the paper copy to the School Office. **Deadline 14 December 2012.**