



Middle School

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Dear Parents,

Half term has arrived, after a bruising five weeks of bad weather. It has been a feature of this time that the behaviour of pupils at lunch and after school has been good and morale has been high, considering the restrictions that flooded fields, and driving, horizontal rain have placed upon us all. There have been some late cancellations to house sports and some last-minute inter-school sports fixtures, which I know have caused concern to parents trying to plan their pick-up times. It makes even short-term planning a hit and miss affair, and everyone involved is aware of the problems caused. However, the house sports and the hockey have flourished, and our teams are exceeding expectations this term. A particular mention is needed for the Year 8 boys, whose efforts and results will surely establish Rossall as a force to be reckoned with in boys' hockey, and also in Fives. Mr Fairhurst and Mr Root deserve special mention for their determination to bring the boys on, and the return of Mr Emmett has also been welcome. The girls have been just as busy. Should I also mention the recent girls' hockey double victory over Arnold School?

There have been relatively few absences through ill health, considering the weather, although there are a lot of bandaged and plastered arms at present. We do have a few parents taking winter family holidays in term time, and this always has some effect in the short to medium term on their child's education. We discourage it, we cannot fill the gaps with extra lessons or tutorials, and parents doing so must accept full responsibility for the outcome. We recognise that there may be a particular temptation this school year, due to our holidays being somewhat displaced from the state and independent day school holidays, due to the unusually early Easter celebration, but please think twice before succumbing!

There has been a big push to establish reliable patterns of homework being set to Middle School pupils, and a copy of the homework timetable follows this letter. Letters and the timetable itself are also available on the new school website (parents' area). You can expect prep to be set at those times, and pupils are expected to keep their diary accurately in this respect. If anyone has more prep than they can complete in one evening, you may note this to the teacher or tutor in the diary. Thirty minutes is a reasonable time for a single prep at this age, but some pupils have the time and motivation to exceed this. Many pupils have attended supervised prep (4.05 – 5.15pm) in order to reduce their requirement for working at home. Only 80% of parents regularly sign the diaries, which is a shame as there are often messages from teachers to parents and tutors written within.

It was noted by last summer's Parents' Survey that it is difficult to contact Middle School during the day. A note of explanation is long overdue, so here goes. The three offices of myself, Mrs Cross and Mr Hall are only open before morning school, at lunch time and after school, and even then the duty teacher will not necessarily be at hand at all times. Even my mobile spends much of the day switched off, as I teach a fairly busy timetable of lessons to Year 7, 9 10, 11, 12 and 13. I am always in the building from 8.00-8.15am, if you need to notify an absence or want to make an appointment. Otherwise, the quickest way to contact us is to phone 774201 and ask the receptionist to drop a message in a pigeon hole, and we will ring you back as soon as possible, or pass a message on to your child.

A number of boys have been growing their hair longer than school regulations allow and I have asked them to get their hair cut. Girls with long hair have been reminded recently of the need to keep it all tied back, and that make up is not permitted in Middle School. We are reliant on parents' support in these matters, as in all things, although we do know that some girls untie their hair, roll up the tops of their skirts and slap on their make up *after arriving* at school. Year 9 are particularly guilty in this respect.

Have you tried the food at Mondo Café yet? It is superb, but if you are letting your children eat there unsupervised, please know that this will only be permitted before 5.30pm if there is a note from a parent for the Head of Year to read in advance, and if your child has no commitment to sport or activities at that time. We would suggest that a responsible adult should generally be present, if only to ensure the bill is settled and that behaviour is appropriate. There is no teacher supervision in the café.

Lost clothing is always an issue, and I sent another unclaimed batch (bin-bag full) of miscellaneous sports clothing, coats, socks and shoes to our main lost property store this week, next door to the school dining hall. None of the items were labelled.

Every half term, each Head of Year names a couple of 'Honours Students' and we present them with a shield and a certificate, one for academic achievement, progress or effort, and the other for service to the community (Special Award). I am pleased to name the deserving recipients for this half term to be: Scott Hughes and Harley Taylor (Year 7), Rebecca Rimmer and Josh Landmann (Year 8), Jessica Boyd and Ella Baxter (Year 9).

Finally, the House Competitions look to be much closer fought this year, with Stag's Head struggling to keep its nose (antlers?) in front. The 'hot breath' of Dragon House can already be felt on its neck, and Falcon House is far from being ruled out at this stage. Falcon won the House Quiz magnificently in December, and we still have over half of the house events to complete.

I look forward greatly to next half term, the arrival of spring weather (unpredictable, alas), the lengthening of daylight hours (thankfully predictable, according to my science books), and the Year 9 D of E Expedition to Littledale at the end of term (utterly unpredictable, and all the better for it). Arts' Week (including the Year 8 version of 'The Wind in the Willows') and all of the wonderful events of that seven days is definitely worth looking forward to, and I am sure will receive your support.

Yours sincerely,

Ken Sullivan
Head of Middle School

Days for prep to be SET

YEAR 7

Monday	French Art
Tuesday	Science English German
Wednesday	Maths Science R.S. (set1)
Thursday	English Maths R.S.(set 2)
Friday	Geography History

YEAR 8

Monday	Science French R.S.(set 2)
Tuesday	English Maths Art (S)
Wednesday	Science English
Thursday	Geography Art (R) German
Friday	Maths History R.S. (set 1)

YEAR 9

Monday	History Art (R) R.S.(set 1)
Tuesday	Maths Science
Wednesday	English Art (S) French
Thursday	Maths Science R.S.(set 2)
Friday	English Geography German