

WH/RNM/APRILLET

27 April 2011

Dear Parent/Carer

I hope that the recent school holiday and this 'Bank' holiday are treating you and your family well. I would like to take the opportunity to bring you up to date with a few matters.

UNIFORM; LOOKING AHEAD

As you will be aware from my previous newsletters we are reviewing our uniform. The current uniform has been our dress code for some time, but we feel it no longer represents the achievement, aspiration and direction our school is taking, and neither does it present an appropriate public face for our school.

We have undertaken a consultation with our young people, who with the exception of Year 7 have overwhelmingly asked for change; but as you might imagine there is little agreement from the young people about what the new uniform should look like. The key questions are whether we have ties for both boys and girls, or whether girls should have cravats or scarves, what the policy should be on jumpers, cardigans, blazers, and what guidance should be given around the style and length of skirts. Throughout this we are mindful of cost and ease of supply.

I would be delighted to hear your views, which I can then pass onto the Governors for consideration. You can write to me by post, with the envelope marked 'Uniform Consultation' or reply by email to info@bostonspa.leeds.sch.uk with the subject marked 'Uniform Consultation'. I would appreciate this by Thursday 5 May 2011.

UNIFORM; THE SUMMER TERM

While we look forward to what our uniform should look like from September, we still expect our current uniform to be worn properly. There is no reason for any student to be wearing non uniform coats, tops or cardigans or any scarves anywhere in school. They should not be seen and if they are brought into school then they need to be out of sight in bags or lockers, and certainly removed before tutor time.

A conventional black cardigan, jumper or sweat shirt all with a school logo may be worn around school. Our current school uniform states that a plain top coat can be worn. Hoodies, denim, colourful tops and those emblazoned with logos other than schools are not allowed to be worn around school. Where young people persist in wearing non school uniform items, including jewellery or other accessories, they should be handed to a member of staff, labelled and put in the Year Office. We are very grateful to parents and carers for their support in this.

TENNIS CENTRE

It has seemed a very long wait, and at times it appeared there were so many barriers to us succeeding, but last week we are delighted to have taken possession of the Tennis Centre.

It is a brilliant facility that will enrich our curriculum, our primary schools and our community. Mr Harper saw the potential and had the vision some time ago, but we seemed to hit every barrier and opposition possible. During the last four years we have secured over half a million pounds of funding to bring the project to life; it has taken some steadfast determination in such economically difficult times to build a facility such as this one, particularly as we have managed it without the cost of a single pound to our school budget.

It contains two full sized tennis courts, undercover, and is situated at the south end of the existing tennis courts. During the day it will be a fantastic, and huge, indoor teaching space for our PE team. After school, during evenings, weekends and our holidays we will lead a tennis development programme for the young, while at other times letting courts to clubs, associations and our community. If you are involved with a group who might want to use the facility please email info@bostonspa.leeds.sch.uk with the subject marked 'Tennis Centre Enquiry'. Our first classes are using it now, and we will also shortly be holding a formal opening ceremony, news of which will follow later.

BERLIN VISIT

Over the recent holiday seventy-one young people and nine staff went on our Berlin visit. As well as attending Hertha Berlin vs. SFC Paderborn at the Olympic Stadium, they visited the Jewish Museum, the Memorial to the Murdered Jews, Checkpoint Charlie, the TV tower, a former Stasi prison, the Story of Berlin Museum, the Pergamon museums, Berlin Zoo and the East Side Gallery - the longest remaining stretch of the Berlin Wall. Few city visits involving teenagers can avoid shopping expeditions, and this was no exception, taking in Ku-Damm in the West at Alexanderplatz and Friedrichstrasse in the East.

As well as the sightseeing there were plenty of opportunities to practice German speaking skills by interviewing Berliners, shopping in a local Market and asking directions to navigate around the city. The visit ended with a challenging, thought-provoking and poignant visit to Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp.

The Berlin visit is a fantastic opportunity I am grateful to all the staff that made it happen, especially Mr Brennan and Miss Sweeney; we can be so proud of the young people who were a credit to us all.

PRIMARY MATHS

Recently we welcomed young people from local Primary schools for a Maths Club, where they took part in decision making maths based around problem solving, using reasoning and logical thinking, under the leadership of Miss Pitt. They looked at the Bridges of Königsberg problem - a large river runs through this Prussian city cutting it into four sections that are joined by seven bridges; after discovering that there is no solution (the easy bit!) they analysed how they could alter the problem to create a solution; congratulations are due to all involved.

UK ROCKETRY CHALLENGE

Building on the success of last year's balloon launch, Mr Hugill has entered our school into the UK Rocketry Challenge for 2011. After numerous flights, and many hours work through the half term holiday the team of David Kilburn, Marcus Chipp, Sam Kidd, and Alex Hull have won themselves through to the national finals in Leicester.

The challenge is to lift (and return) an egg in a rocket as close to 750 feet as possible. We initially managed 763 feet, with our highest rocket reaching 917 feet, measured by a self contained micro altimeter placed in the nose cone, which measured the change in air pressure and converting it to an altitude. We look forward to news of their progress next month.

WEB SITE

We have a new school web site where all these newsletters are posted, and where weekly news of the school can be found in the Headteacher's 'blog'.

We never underestimate the privilege of being entrusted with the care of your daughter or son, these are important weeks for them all; this can become an anxious time. We would always want to work with you in support of your family, so please do not hesitate to ask for help if you feel we can.

Yours faithfully

CHRISTOPHER WALSH
Headteacher