



Priory School of Our Lady of Walsingham
Beatrice Avenue, Whippingham
Isle of Wight, PO32 6LP
Tel: 01983 861222

mail@prioryschool.org.uk
www.prioryschool.org.uk



Dear Parents

8 September 2023

Welcome back for the start of a new academic year, and may I offer a special welcome to all those new to our community this term. Whilst greeting pupils at the gate on the first day, it was very evident how smartly dressed and eager they were. I enjoyed hearing about the summer holidays and hope to learn even more of their adventures. That said, if your son or daughter is feeling anxious, I would offer three pieces of advice.

Firstly, please make every effort to normalise the feeling. It is perfectly normal to experience a range of emotions when starting at a new school or returning after a long holiday.

Secondly, please encourage your children to ask for help whenever they need it. Asking for help should be seen as a strength, and prefects and staff are on hand to resolve most issues. We encourage growth mindsets whereby problems are seen as manageable obstacles and valuable learning points.

Thirdly, do encourage the children to engage with the co-curricular life of the school, for example, to join clubs and activities, as this is an excellent way to make friends and settle in.

As is often the case, the weather has changed at the beginning of term, and it is currently very hot. Please take all the usual precautions for sunny days, including appropriate sun cream. For those who are not aware, we do switch to 'Shirt Sleeve Order' in such conditions and pupils can remove their jumpers, blazers and ties, and roll up their sleeves. However, they should arrive at and leave school in full uniform.

Soon after my arrival, I started sharing with you the 'word (or phrase) of the week', and this is based on my assembly theme for that particular week. Full school assemblies are held every Monday during General Time at 11.40am and are led by me. This term I have added a 'thought or question of the week', which Form Tutors will develop with their classes. Subject teachers may also do this if appropriate. I encourage you to reinforce the *word or phrase* and the *thought or question* at home whenever possible.

This week is only a part-week, but given it is the first week of the new academic year, the word is 'resolution' (as in New Year's resolution), and the question is 'how do I make permanent change in my life'. The theme of the assembly is about not waiting until 1 January, the first day of the month, a Monday or indeed any other arbitrarily selected day to enact change. Why not start now, whatever the day or time? Furthermore, I have set a community resolution and that is to make all newcomers to the school feel welcome, happy and like valued members of our community. I also encouraged the pupils to make a personal resolution for the start of the school year. One S5 pupil has committed to an hour of revision per night and two Junior School pupils aim to eat less processed food and to reduce screen time respectively. All of these are most commendable.

To those of you new to the school – if concerns arise, please first try to let your son or daughter resolve the matter independently, but if this is not appropriate or successful, then do make contact with the relevant tutor. We are a small and close-knit community and we have a staff briefing every morning of the week. We use this time to raise individual and collective pastoral matters and to discuss the best way forward.

Now a plea if I may – I am looking for parents and friends to contribute towards our Tuesday Talk Programme. We invite guests in during Tuesday General Time to talk to some or all of the pupils about their



job, career or passion in life. Please do not be shy about coming forward to offer a talk. We will work around your availability and our pupils are genuinely lovely.

Finally special mention must go our S5 and Upper Sixth pupils who received their GCSE and A Level results last month. All of our Upper Sixth go to their chosen universities and destinations and our GCSE results summary is as follows:

- 100% pass rate
- 97% at grades 9 – 4
- 50% at grades 9 – 7

This is a fabulous set of results and our best ever. Thank you and well done to the pupils, their parents and all the staff at Priory School. We are very proud of the class of 2023.

Reports

1. Wed 6 Sept Christmas Term began

Future Dates & Events

1. Tues 12 Sept Tuesday Talk 'Agriculture' (Mr Hayles)
2. Sat 16 – Sun 17 Sept Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Assessed Expedition

Achievements

Adam Farley (S5) passed his Grade 7 LAMDA (London Academy of Music & Dramatic Art) Speaking Verse & Prose Exam with a Distinction. He did this at Portsmouth High School on 28 June accompanied by Ms Law. We are delighted with his result.

Adam has also enjoyed success in rowing as Shanklin & Sandown Rowing Club travelled to Dorset for the annual Poole Regatta last weekend. The squad won the aggregate trophy for the most successful club and for the junior events (under 16), both for the second season in succession. Adam was part of the team which came a convincing first, rowing 1.2km against 7 other clubs to win the J16 Quad race.

Also in rowing, Mai Mackay (S4) has continued her run of success. Crews and scullers from Ryde Rowing Club competed in the last Hants & Dorset Amateur Rowing Association Regatta of the season on Saturday 2 September, and the highlight for the Ryde Club was a winning performance from their Men's Coastal Junior Four with Mai coxing. Mai coxed another crew to second place and achieved similar success in the Girls' J14 Doubles race.

Georgia White and Isla Bell (both Year 6) achieved their Freestyle Gold Dance Award with the International Dance Teachers' Association. Georgia was 'Highly Commended' and Isla was 'Commended'. Well done to both girls.

Neave Bell (Year 4) has had a very successful summer of football. At the Brighton and Hove Albion FC (mixed) Summer Camp she was awarded 'Best Player', and at the Southampton FC (girls) Summer Camp Neave was awarded 'Player of the Week' and 'Fastest Time Trial'. Southampton FC divided the girls into teams and Neave's Team were also 'Champions League Winners'. As a result, Neave has been selected to



Priory School of Our Lady of Walsingham
Beatrice Avenue, Whippingham
Isle of Wight, PO32 6LP
Tel: 01983 861222

mail@prioryschool.org.uk
www.prioryschool.org.uk



join the prestigious Southampton FC Girls Player Development Programme and this is the first step to becoming a professional footballer. This is tremendous news and we look forward to hearing more of Neave's progress.

If your child enjoys success outside of school, whether personal or as part of a team, then please let us know so that we can include information in the Newsletter and share it in assembly.

Beatrice Avenue Parking

Please avoid parking on Beatrice Avenue. Instead, use the car park when visiting. Help us to be road safety conscious and to preserve our harmonious working relationship with the school's neighbours. Please note that coaches use Beatrice Avenue en route to St Mildred's Church and there are a number of pinch points along the road.

Happy new (academic) year!

David EJJ Lloyd
Principal