



PENNTHORPE SCHOOL

Newsletter

6th January 2012



Dear parents

A happy new year to you all and thank you for all the lovely cards, gifts and kind wishes we received both as a staff and as a family. I hope your Christmases have been as special as our first one here at school was. Somehow, Santa managed to penetrate the tight lines of security fencing and electronic gates so that the King children were not disappointed on Christmas morning!

Of course, for some, the holiday isn't a complete break from school. Snow came in the nick of time in Austria for our skiers and Miss Goddard reports that the trip was one of the most successful we have run, with many participants already re-booking for next year. Big thanks to Mr Mussellwhite and Mr McConnell who also supported the trip and brought a little humour to proceedings (the former with his competitive approach to ten pin bowling and the latter with his novice skiing!).



It won't surprise you too to learn that our choirs were far from dormant and joined the Horsham Brass Band for a fabulous Christmas concert at Holy Trinity Church in Horsham. Thanks as always to the staff that ran this event and also to those of you who came along to offer support.

We're delighted to welcome four **new pupils** to Pennthorpe this term: Isla Saker (Honey Pot), Rory McGregor (Beehive), Oliver Fry (1F) and Philippa Shaw (1W). I'm sure we will all make them and their families very welcome and we extend similar sentiments to Miss Sally Stevens who joins us as maternity cover for Mrs Fourie.



You will have noted the excellent progress that has been made on the **Art and Design Centre** which we plan to open after half term. It's exciting enough to imagine how the new facility will boost what are already two of our strongest departments. However the addition of the IMac suite adds a further level of anticipation to proceedings and will hopefully encourage possible candidates for the new position that we will be advertising in the coming weeks for a **Head of E-Learning**. As some of you may have heard, Mr Wood will be leaving us in the summer having won the race for a prestigious Deputy Headship in Middlesex and we are seeking a

replacement whose unconventional job description reflects the innovative way we are moving forwards with ICT. We are looking for a big picture thinker who understands the key role ICT has to play in enriching the whole curriculum and who is ready to steer our continuing efforts to inspire and educate through the use of technology. Should you know any suitably ambitious and progressive educationalists or technicians then do please point them in our direction.

A new year always brings a few changes but most this term will be minor. Pupils in Year 5-8 will notice a change at **lunch times** this term. We have a new "Food Group" set up this year and it has highlighted the importance of a more settled lunch time sitting in encouraging good manners and healthy eating. For this reason then we will be introducing two proper lunchtime sittings at 1300 and 1330 during which Grace will be said, notices given and tables cleared in a more orderly and uniform fashion. Pupils will no longer be allowed to leave the moment they have finished and we hope this will encourage less rushing, better eating habits and a greater sense of calm at this key time of day. We know it won't be popular with some of our children but hope you'll support us because we believe strongly that mealtimes should remain an important social opportunity and should echo the family times we all enjoy at home. This nicely mirrors the pre prep's table manners initiative being run at the moment too. Mrs Bradley will be letting pre prep parents know more about this so that you can help your children to vie for the honour of having the best table manners and being invited to a special lunch with the Headmaster!

I hope you will also have noted **suggestion boxes** set up in the main entrance hall and Pre Prep foyer and through a link in the parent area of the school's website. We hope you'll use these if you have any great ideas

as to how we can improve the education and service we provide at Pennthorpe. For the first time later this term too we will be publishing the school's **Development Plan** online so you can see where we are headed as a school and how we intend to keep ourselves as the forward thinking school of choice in our local area.

Prepare for major changes in the way we communicate with you and keep you informed as to your children's progress during 2012. For a while now we have been constructing a **Parent Portal** through which you will be able to access all your children's records, grades, calendar information and relevant communication from any computer and at any time of the year. The system will also synch to your mobile phones if you are regularly on the move but keen not to miss that vital set of efforts grades or key school match. The portal will open for some year groups in the first half of term and we will then aim to roll it out to others as the year progresses. Our thanks go to Richard Hurley, one of our Governors, who has been instrumental in designing this and has been exceedingly generous with his time and his ideas.

You may come to note my wife's creeping influence on Pennthorpe in the early weeks of this term. Sadly Mrs Sharkey has been unable to return to school this week due to a chest infection and the versatile Mrs King will be stepping into the breach to teach **English** in Years 7 and 8. Some of you will know she was Head of English at the school we both worked at in Dorset until we had our children and I know that she's excited about the challenge of resuming her classroom teaching (I think excited was the word she used anyway!). Classes in Years 5 and 6 will be taken by Miss O'Brien and Miss Stevens who both already teach other English classes in these age groups so disruption should be minimal. I know we all wish Mrs Sharkey a very speedy recovery.

Finally then let me wish you a wonderful 2012. It's going to be a

very exciting Olympic year and one these children will probably remember for the rest of their lives. Our chapel theme this week is "**Carpe Diem**" and I shall be encouraging pupils to seize the day and make their lives extraordinary (film buffs will note a flavour of Dead Poets Society here!). I've said before that Pennthorpe life is never dull and I'm equally determined to think that neither we nor our staff or pupils should ever be described as simply ordinary.

Thank you for your ongoing support

Matthew King

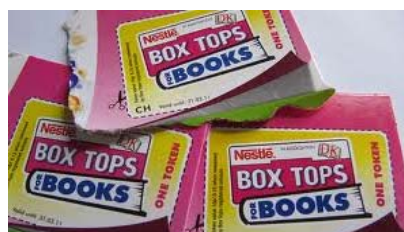
Calpol

Please think carefully before sending children who are feeling under the weather into school. At this time of year infections spread very quickly. If your child has been unwell enough to need a dose of Calpol they really should not be sent in. Please do alert Matron to any medication that your child may be taking as soon as possible.



Breakfast boosts Literacy!

We all know that starting your day with a healthy breakfast is good, but now eating a cereal for breakfast can improve literacy skills! We are taking part in the Nestle "Box tops for Books" scheme which runs until March 2012. Please cut out tokens from Nestle cereal boxes and post them in the collection box in the main entrance near Reception. We will collect tokens and then exchange them for books for the School Library. Thank you!



Coats

Please can we remind you to make sure that children bring their school coats in every day now that the weather is starting to turn nasty.



Fixture venue change

On Wednesday 18th January, we have two fixtures in the calendar against Shoreham, one for the 1st XV and the other for the Colts A. Shoreham have transport issues for that day so we have swapped the fixtures - it will now be 1st XV at home and Colts A away.

And finally...

The Christmas holiday brought additional cause for celebration for two of our staff who received proposals from their long term partners. Both Lauren Betts and Sally Stevens were delighted to accept and we wish them very happy engagements with wonderful weddings at the end. With Mrs Fourie previously tying the knot, we can only presume there really must be something very romantic about that old Performing Arts studio!



JANUARY 2012	
Date	Event
Mon 9th	FOP meeting 7.45 p.m. English Room
Tues 10 th	
Weds 11 th	1st XII Rugby v Dorset House (A) Colts A Rugby v Dorset House (H) Colts B Rugby v Dorset House (A) U132A , B & C Netball v Duke of Kent H) U11 Netball v Duke of Kent (A)
Thur 12th	Able Writers workshop at Hurstpierpoint for selected pupils from Year 5
Friday 13th	