



RICHARD PATE

INDEPENDENT CO-ED SCHOOL 3-11
CHELTENHAM

Dear Parents,

Monday 4th November, 2019

I hope this newsletter finds you all well after the two week half term break. Mrs MacDonald and I have returned from a lovely holiday in Nova Scotia where we have been visiting my family. The first six and a half weeks of term seemed to pass in a blink of an eye and I have no doubt the second half will move with a similar alacrity. In this newsletter I hope to give a quick recap of the many successes of the children and a peek into the coming weeks as well.

Grammar School Results: Just before half term the first of the grammar school results started arriving in my inbox and it was a busy weekend as parents shared the news. Inevitably there are one or two surprises but once again the children have acquitted themselves well. As it currently stands we have 10 children who have qualified for Pate's Grammar School, there are another 10 who have qualified for Denmark Road, 5 who qualify for Sir Thomas Rich, 1 for Crypt, 1 for Ribston and 1 for Marling. This is a highly impressive outcome considering the size of our school and the number of children who now sit the grammar school entrance test from Gloucestershire and well beyond. A number of our Year 6s are now going through the independent entrance and scholarship exams and that process runs for the next three months. I am tremendously proud of our children for the way they work through this challenging process. On Tuesday I will be hosting two information sessions for Year 4 and 5 parents on the transition to secondary schools, one will take place at 3.00pm and one at 7.00pm in the Hall. If you would like to come along please let Mrs Hayman or Mrs Thornton know in the office.

Charitable Initiatives: We continue to feel very grateful for the generosity of the Richard Pate family and it was lovely to see the large amount of canned goods that were donated for our Harvest Festival. The children sang beautifully and the choir were impressive in their first public performance under Miss Crompton. The Year 2 children entertained us all with a rhythmical rap and we all paused to say thank you for the many blessings we all enjoy. The produce was despatched to a number of grateful recipients to kick off another year of generous giving.

This year we have decided to take a year away from the Christmas Shoe Box Campaign and we are in discussion with some more local charities to focus on for the Christmas season. I will be sharing more details shortly.

Uniform: As we return for the second half of term we will expect to see all the children arriving in winter uniform. As the threat of cold weather draws nearer we remind all parents that on particularly cold days the children are welcome to wear their tracksuit bottoms to school to stay warm. We also ask for your help in reminding your children to bring their coats home from school and to wear them in these ever colder mornings. They will also require regulation school hats, scarves and mittens or gloves.

Curriculum Focus: Mr Chesworth and Mrs Conner have led us through an excellent Curriculum Focus in the first half of term. This term's spotlight is Religious Education and we have seen the children travel to mosques, temples, synagogues, churches and cathedrals to learn more about places of worship. Throughout the term we have been learning about the six main world religions and gaining a greater understanding of similarities and interesting differences that distinguish each faith. We have been very grateful to parents who have come to speak at assemblies and to our own children who have enlightened us on their experiences in the places of worship. We shall continue to focus on RE throughout the remainder of this term.

Recent Successes: Our Under 11 girls' hockey team have made us all incredibly proud when they came out victorious at the IAPS Southwest Regional Hockey Championships on the 11th October. They were a force to be reckoned with as they did not lose a single match on their way to being crowned champions. The top two teams from each region go through to the National Finals which will be played in Hertfordshire later this month. The boys have completed a successful first half of term in their rugby performances and the fixture list is full for hockey, rugby and football over the next 6 weeks.

Our runners continue to show great promise and in the first of the cross country competitions our team laid down a strong marker. Each race featured approximately 100 runners. Maddie Thomson finished first overall in the Under 11 girls' race and Jack Pennell finished 6th in the Year 5 boys' race. Another impressive result saw Year 4 Ellie Thomson racing in the Year 5 girls race and she finished in 3rd place. These were just three of the very impressive performances on the day.

We also had an excellent result when four of our very strong mathematicians competed at Dean Close in a challenge that saw 50 teams compete from 25 state and independent schools. We entered 2 teams and the team featuring Maryam Vaqas and Rosie Mullard finished 1st overall with Oliver Gill and Rishi Rathnam's team finishing 5th. It is great to see our children competing so favourably across so many disciplines.

Personal Hygiene and Handwashing: We are conscious that the winter months can often bring a proliferation of colds, flu and nasty germs. We would be grateful if you could remind your children of the importance of washing their hands after visiting the toilet and before eating or handling any food. Reminding them of this message will help to minimise time off school and sharing any bugs if they are contracted. On Wednesday 6th November we have the flu immunisation team on hand to inoculate those children who have signed up.

Car Park: Our car park continues to be a busy place and even though there is occasionally a wait to find a space we need to remember how fortunate we are compared to the vast majority of schools for the space we do have. Patience, as always, is essential to ensure that it is as safe a place as possible. I would also like to remind everyone that use of mobile phones while driving is strictly prohibited. We also ask that drivers switch their engines off once they have parked. Finally I must also remind everyone that our relationship with the local residents is hugely important to us. I was disappointed to receive complaints from two of our neighbours just before half term. One detailed an angry exchange with one of our parents who obstructed their drive while the other complained about parents allowing their children to relieve themselves on the lower car park. Needless to say these interactions do not make for the best of relationships and I ask for your help to ensure they do not occur going forward.

After School Club Booking: I wanted to remind everyone that if you had a regular booking from the first half of term this will continue. If your circumstances have changed and you no longer require a booking please let Mrs Hayman know. Cancelling an After School Booking should happen before midday on the day in question otherwise you may well be charged.

PTA News: The PTA continues to benefit from new members and the next meeting takes place this evening at 8.00pm in the Library. Please do come along if you're free. They have a number of events coming up later this term and we hope you can join us for those as well. For the first time ever we will be hosting a Christmas Shopping Evening and this takes place on 15th November from 7pm – 9.30pm. We also look forward to the Christmas Fair that takes place on 30th November from 12pm – 2.30pm. The PTA will be looking for a number of items from parents and are always keen to find helpers for the day even if it is for a 30-minute slot. As always we will be holding a Christmas Raffle and we would be grateful for any donations large or small. We also look forward to Wreath Making Workshop which is open to parents on Friday 6th December. Before half term we enjoyed a wonderful PTA Quiz night where we managed to raise money for the School and enjoy a highly entertaining evening. Thank you to Simon Lewis for delivering another entertaining quiz which was enjoyed by all in attendance.

It has been a great pleasure to watch your children flourish in this first half of term. The School continues to come alive with their wonderful art work and the many displays throughout the corridors show how proud they are of their efforts. The second half of the Autumn Term is filled with many highlights including the Prep Nativity Play, the Nursery Christmas Celebration, the Carol Service in Cheltenham College Chapel, the Christmas Fayre, Strictly Come Dancing and the list goes on. I hope you will be able to join us for some or all of those wonderful events as the term unfolds.

Yours sincerely,

Robert MacDonald

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