



RICHARD PATE

INDEPENDENT CO-ED SCHOOL 3-11
CHELTENHAM

Monday 23rd October, 2023

Dear Parents,

It feels like the blink of an eye since we welcomed everyone back to a new school year and yet here we are at half term already. We have enjoyed welcoming so many of you to the Open Door sessions, Reception Parents' Cup of Tea and Phonics Introduction, the Nursery Wine and Cheese, the PTA Quiz Night as well as seeing you for sports fixtures. The children have been busy in their classrooms but many have also enjoyed the opportunity to attend the Literature Festival thanks to the generous donation of our PTA. The second half of term looks to be every bit as busy with various trips going on outside of school as well as the festive run up to Christmas.

In this newsletter I will share some important notices and give a quick update on some of those exciting events and successes of this half of the term, as well as looking forward to the coming weeks.

Grammar School Results: It is this time of year that we begin to learn the next destinations for our Year 6 leavers and the first piece of the puzzle is the sharing of results by the grammar schools. We had a good number sit the grammar entrance test back in September and on Monday the results were sent to parents. We are not notified by the grammar schools so must wait for parents to alert us to the outcome. It has been another successful year with 27 of the children qualifying for one of the seven grammar schools with 8 of those qualifying for Pate's Grammar School. We will not know until the 1st March where the final destinations are likely to be but at this point between parental choice and pupil rankings it appears we could have as many as 5 going to Sir Thomas Rich, 7 going to Denmark Road and the rest split between the other four grammar options. Year 6 parents need to fill in their Common Application Form by the 31st October to rank their choices. We have also had five girls go to Cheltenham Ladies' College for their very early assessment date and we have others following to King's, Dean Close, Cheltenham College and St Edward's in the coming weeks. I am tremendously proud of each and every one of them for the effort they have been investing and we look forward to an exciting Year 6 experience for the remainder of their journey.

Road and Car Park Safety: It has become a regular message in The Link about road safety but I am afraid it continues to cause me sleepless nights with some of the careless road use we have been seeing recently. We have had three very near misses in the past two weeks and it is partly caused by driver inattention and partly because our children are assuming every driver can see them at all times. We need people to follow the one way system in our car park and adhere to the speed limits while you are here. We also had a near miss at Cheltenham College with parents driving far too quickly in their haste to depart. I know life is busy but none of us will forgive ourselves if we have a serious accident or a fatality. Please remind your children of their responsibility as well.

SchoolCloud Parent Meetings: This week, we have completed our SchoolCloud Parent Meetings for Reception to Year 5. We know this system works for many busy parents as it cuts down on travel time, over-running appointments and lengthy queues but others may miss that face to face contact. We understand the Open Door sessions continue to be a positive way for the children to show off their classrooms and we know that your children have very much enjoyed sharing their work with you. However, we are always grateful for any feedback and would appreciate you taking a couple of minutes to complete this survey about parents' meetings by following this link <https://forms.office.com/e/iQUm9P4m0r>.

Charitable Initiatives: We continue to feel very grateful for the generosity of the Richard Pate family and it was wonderful to see the amazing amount of dried foods and canned goods that were donated for our Harvest Festival recently. As always, the Harvest Assembly was an opportunity to pause and say thank you for the many blessings we all enjoy. Your generous donations were despatched to a number of appreciative recipients via Cheltenham Community Projects, Cheltenham Open Door, the Trussell Trust Food Bank, Astell House and St Faith's and they were grateful for lovely hand-written letters crafted by our Year 4s. As I mentioned in the Link we are looking for the children to write to me with some suggested charities to support in our upcoming Charity Day. Children should submit their choices by the end of the first week back. We will then have the Debating Club present each charity before we hold an election for the chosen three.

Music: Miss Crompton has been delighted by the engagement and dedication of our musicians across the School this term both in the classroom and in individual lessons. We have seen an amazing turn out for our Senior Choir (Years 5 and 6) and we are looking forward to both the Carol Concert in December and Young Voices in January. Our Year 4 children have enthusiastically thrown themselves into their Samba music project this term and are enjoying playing the samba instruments. We now look forward to a busy few weeks of rehearsing in the run up to Christmas and welcoming our new singing teacher to the team.

Sport: We have had a great half term of sport with a good balance of lessons, matches and tournaments in (mostly!) glorious weather and we have seen a return to match teas on Wednesdays which has been positive. Our specialist coaches, Mr Foster, Mrs Birks and Mr Smith, have been fantastic supporting Mrs Knight and Mr Edwards and it has been lovely seeing the children develop and practise their skills in hockey, rugby and netball. Our very own intra-boys Rugby World Cup tournament, our new mixed boys and girls' netball club and hockey goalkeeping club have all been particular favourites, with many of our younger children also enjoying before school tennis club.

Another highlight has been our U11 Girls' Hockey team reaching the Quarter Finals in a strong IAPS Regional Hockey Championships in Oxford recently but sadly our U11 Boys' Football team were gutted at the cancellation of the always popular Albert Dix tournament due to the torrential rain on Friday.

The Junior Cross Country team has been busy with races last week at Newlands Rugby grounds for the boys while sadly the rain cancelled the girls' event at Ashley Manor Prep. Well done to all the boys involved for showing tenacity against stiff competition! The girls will certainly get their opportunity.

We have much to look forward to in the next half of term with more fixtures, house competitions and a swimming gala.

Uniform: As we return for the second half of term we will expect to see all the children arriving in winter uniform on their uniform days. We have decided to maintain the current changing arrangements for after half term so the Juniors will still be required to come into School in their PE and Games kits on days that they have Games and PE or an after school sports club. We also ask for your help in reminding your children to bring their coats home from school and to wear them as the mornings become wetter and colder. In addition, they will require regulation school hats, scarves and mittens or gloves (these can be purchased via SchoolBlazer). On the very coldest of days the children are welcome to wear their tracksuit bottoms to keep warm. I leave this to your discretion. We would also like to see the children adhere to the wider uniform protocols with those with long hair tying their hair up with uniform hair ties. Finally, we would like to remind you that children should not be wearing watches to school or any jewellery, which includes earrings.

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 keep everyone safe as we move into winter.

PTA News: Our fabulous PTA have once again been doing a great job and it was wonderful to see so many parents joining in the Quiz Night recently – we had a record number of teams this year! After half term we have more to look forward to including the PTA Christmas Fair on Saturday 25th November and the Christmas Wreath Workshop on Thursday 30th November – more details to follow soon.

Diary Dates: Please see the calendar attached to last Friday's Link for information on the second half of term. We continue to update events on the website so it is worth checking there for the most up to date information.

As always, it has been wonderful to see your children enjoying activities both in the classroom and in our extra-curricular programme during this first half of term. I hope you all enjoy your children's company over the next two weeks as much as we have over the first half of term. Please make sure you all stay safe and we look forward to welcoming you all back on Monday 6th November.

Yours sincerely,

Robert MacDonald

Robert MacDonald
Headmaster