

March 2017

Dear Parents

I have very much enjoyed this term and particularly seeing so many students involved in such a wide range of activities. I am most grateful to all the members of staff who work very hard to enable these activities to take place.

Academic

A large number of Theatre, History, Geography, Physics and Art trips have brightened the term with a successful study trip to Berlin at half-term. The early part of the term was dominated by mock examinations for the S5 year group with the U6 undertaking mock examinations immediately after half-term. The students have performed extremely well in the various national academic competitions. Particular congratulations went to our Economists earlier in the term for reaching the North and Midlands Final of the Bank of England's Target 2.0 Competition. One of our teams in the European Youth Parliament debating competition has reached the national finals to be held in Liverpool in September. In the Sam Hood Classics Translation competition Birkdale students Harriet Freeman and Harvey Cao achieved the prize and the runner-up position respectively, the first time that both positions have been claimed by students from the same school. The school's main science laboratories will be refurbished during the second half of next term, further enhancing the facilities for experimental work in the sciences.

Sport

A large number of football and rugby VII's matches have been played as well as fixtures in netball, hockey and basketball; cross-country running has also been popular. I am most grateful to the large number of parents who support school sport through watching from the touch line or ensuring that their children are available to play Saturday fixtures. A large number of pupils are registered for the various Duke of Edinburgh awards with a highlight for the Sixth Form students being the recent training day. A group of footballers are currently on tour in Barcelona following successful tours for different age-groups to Newcastle and Liverpool.

The Arts

A number of concerts have showcased musical talent at Birkdale including a fantastic solos concert, a reminder of the very large numbers of pupils who learn at least one instrument and of the high standards reached. We look forward to the production of John Godber's comedy 'Teachers' to take place on Monday 8 May and Tuesday 9 May. Next term will also see the usual displays of work in Art and Design and Technology on 19 May. The main Summer Term Concert is on Thursday 11 May at 7pm.

Charities

This year's school charity is The Children's Hospital Charity and various events this term including a 24 hour football marathon and a very successful Charities Week have already raised more than £10,000.

Expeditions

As you read this a number of Birkdale staff and students will be in Nepal on what is a fantastically worthwhile expedition. A group of students are visiting New York and Washington to support their studies in Art, History and Politics whilst a different group are in China to support learning in Business Studies and Mandarin.

Exams and Revision

For many pupils in the public examination years of S5, L6 and U6 revision must be a priority over the Easter break. The pressure on university places means that U6 students will need to work very hard to secure the grades needed to meet their offers. The L6 students will want to achieve the best possible grades in their AS modules or internal examinations in preparation for their UCAS applications in the autumn. Finally, I am sure that the S5 pupils will want to achieve sparkling GCSE grades in order to maximise their opportunities for Sixth Form study and in preparation for their own, future UCAS application. Pupils in other year groups will face the usual internal examinations beginning on Monday 5 June.

School Fees Annual Review

The Governors give notice that the annual review of fee levels will take place next term, and new fee levels implemented from the beginning of the Christmas Term 2016. You will appreciate that, whilst we seek to keep fee levels as low as possible, we must also be able to deliver the quality of education which is expected. It is not possible to give a precise indication of fee levels at this point, but full information will be sent out by the end of the Summer Term.

Notice of Leaving

May I remind you that if your son or daughter will, or may, be leaving the school in July 2016 then notice of leaving the school must be given to me in writing on or before Monday 11 April. If not, fees for the Christmas Term will be payable in lieu of notice. If there is any doubt in your mind, please contact me as soon as possible. (The requirement to give notice of leaving does *not*, of course, apply to pupils who are now in U6.) I would like to take the opportunity to wish you a very restful and Happy Easter.

Yours sincerely

P.M. Owen

Head Master