

HEADMASTER:  
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ALLEYN COURT PREPARATORY SCHOOL

WAKERING ROAD  
SOUTHEND-ON-SEA, ESSEX SS3 0PW

09 September 2011

Dear Parents

As a new initiative this year and as a means of improving communication from the school, I will now be writing a weekly newsletter each Friday, which will share the main news about events that have happened during the week as well as forewarning and reminding you about events to come in the next week. I still envisage producing a half term colour newsletter with photos and comments about Alleyn Court also, as well of course as attempting to keep the website up to date with all our news.

I'm sure you will be pleased to hear that we have got off to a very smooth start this week. Colleagues and children, both new and old, all appear to be settling well into the demands of school life and the new developments around the site have all been well received. Whilst many parents visit the bag room as a matter of course, they are less likely to visit the Music Room and Library and I therefore extend a warm welcome and encourage you to take in these areas also, to appreciate for yourselves the work and developments that have been done over the summer.

In identifying the need for improved communication from the school, I have asked all staff to provide electronic copy of letters and information so that they can be submitted to the parents area of the website. As yet, there is no information in this particular area but I am sure that this will soon be rectified. The log-on for this area is : **acparents** and the password is: **acprivate**.

At assembly this week, the following pupil appointments were announced for this academic year:

**Head Boy:** George McAllister                      **Head Girl:** Inés Wilcox

**House Captains:**

<b>Pearsons</b>	Fabian McNamara	Jessica Goody
<b>Rankins</b>	Henry Bashford	Talia Lieberman
<b>Tremaynes</b>	Théo Chandler	Abigail Thompson
<b>Williams</b>	Harrison Scott-Duncan	Pippa Woodford

I wish all these children the best of luck in their new roles and am sure that they will all be most suitable role models. I also expect all remaining Year 6 children

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to act as responsible role models in their capacities as Prefects, Monitors and Librarians.

I have plans to develop assemblies this year and welcome expressions of interest from parents or visitors who wish to come and address us at any time, whether linked to your work, skills or your interests. Similarly, if you have contacts, particularly linked to topical events such as the Olympics, I would be delighted to arrange for them to visit. Mrs Hart has responsibility for organising assemblies and contact can be made with either her or myself to arrange a suitable date and discuss any ideas that you might have.

Another development at assembly each week is that I shall be setting a quiz question for children to go away and independently find the answer. This develops interest and promotes curiosity and independent learning as well as broadening their general knowledge. This week's quiz question was – Who had won the most Olympic medals, cumulatively? I am delighted to report that a number of children have already presented the correct answer, Larissa Latynina, a Russian gymnast who won 18.

A further new development this year is to introduce a carousel of lifeskills, which will happen during last lesson each Wednesday afternoon. I am keen to focus on and introduce skill-based learning, as children will undoubtedly require skills and knowledge for their future success. Each class will do a half-term taster of a particular lifeskill with different members of staff. This programme will start next Wednesday. Currently, the skills on offer for the Junior school children are: Tables & Numeracy skills, Touch Typing & IT familiarisation, Forest Schools/Outdoor Learning, Sign Language and Cookery. For the Senior school children the skills are: Library Skills, Public Speaking & Debating, Sustainability & the Environment, German, Philosophy for Children. In addition to providing dedicated skill based opportunities and learning, this carousel will also broaden our curriculum considerably.

The Pink Calendar and Activity Schedules for this term are released today and once again, they highlight that there is much on offer for the children at the school this term. There are a number of interesting dates within the Pink Calendar, with the visit of an author an excellent means of launching the new library. The Activity schedule also offers a significant amount of choice for the children to develop different interests over the term.

The key dates, which I draw your attention to for this term are:

- PTA coffee mornings, each Monday at the Thorpe Bay site and Tuesday at the Westcliff site.
- Monday 12<sup>th</sup> September – Clubs and Prep start.
- Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> September – PTA AGM at Thorpe Bay (8pm).

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- Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> September – Individual Photographs at Thorpe Bay, families will be photographed first thing on this morning.
- Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> September – Y5 Parents' Evening
- Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> October – Winter Uniform becomes compulsory for all children. Year 6 Mock 11+ Examinations.
- Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> October – Junior School & Year 4 Parents' Evening.
- Monday 10<sup>th</sup> October – Senior School Harvest
- Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> October – Pre-Prep Harvest at Westcliff for all Pre-Prep children. Westcliff parents are invited to the 9:30am performance and Thorpe Bay parents the 11:00am performance.
- Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> October – Y6 Parents' Evening.

The term dates for the next academic year have now been finalised and are attached to this letter.

A couple of matters have been drawn to my attention and I have been asked by colleagues to share their observations and seek your support.

### 1. **Morning line-up**

We appreciate the punctual arrival of children in the morning but are finding it difficult to settle them and pass-on messages in both the Junior and Senior playground when so many parents are still around and chatting amongst themselves. If I can ask that parents depart when the bell is rung and children start to line-up, this would help and be much appreciated.

### 2. **Supervision of children.**

I remind parents that once you have collected children at the end of the school day, supervision of them is your responsibility. I have heard of a number of different incidents that could have resulted in far more serious consequences than they did and I would prefer to avoid such circumstances where possible. I also ask that parents do not allow children to climb in and use the adventure trail equipment as this area really needs to be supervised by a member of the school staff.

In Pre-Prep this week, we are saddened by the departure of Miss Kiernander, who has left to pursue other interests. Miss Cooper replaces her as Teaching Assistant in Paddington class and Mrs Harlett will increase her hours within Tinkerbell class, now teaching every morning.

Looking forward to next week, there are meet and greet occasions for Parents at Westcliff on Tuesday morning (8:45-9:15) and at Thorpe Bay for Pre-Prep parents there (8:45-9:15 also). It has been lovely to chat

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with parents at the meet and greets that have already happened this week.

Yours sincerely

Gareth Davies