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4 December 2015

Dear Parents

Proposal to Close Back Gate

I am consulting parents on a proposal to close the back gate to school from King Alfred's Drive next half term. The gate would be closed from Tuesday 5 January 2016 until Monday 22 February. It would reopen on Tuesday 23 February 2016, after half term. This is because

- Pupils use an unlit pathway near a relatively secluded, remote woodland area on dark mornings and evenings to reach the gate.
- Once inside the school grounds, pupils cross the school playing fields, sometimes in snow, icy, wet or slippery conditions to reach the buildings. There is no footpath from the back gate: sometimes pupils spend the day in wet shoes and their lower legs are splattered with mud.
- Bellrock, the school's facilities provider, has expressed concerns about the health and safety of their staff when locking and unlocking the gate. There are problems in transporting salt and grit to the gate.

This may add time to pupils' journeys to and from school for this period. The opening and closing of the gate will continue as normal outside the above dates, when days are longer and the path leading to the rear of the school site is not so dark. Please contact Mr Gibbons at school no later than Thursday 10 December to make your views known. Contact details: info@cardinalheenan.com

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 were given the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation today as part of the school's Advent programme of prayer and liturgy. Many thanks to local priests who gave generously of their time to administer the sacrament: Mgr Michael McQuinn and Reverend Fathers Sean Crawley (our Priest Chaplain), Tim Wiley, Marc Homsey, Timothy Swinglehurst and Micheal Krychiwskyj.

Prayer and reflection will take place in our tutor groups each day during Advent. The school chapel will be open for prayer and Advent activities. We will also be fundraising and are asking pupils to come up with imaginative, creative ways to help others by supporting CAFOD and St Gemma's Hospice. In these weeks of December we remind pupils that Advent is the season of waiting, expecting, hoping and preparing for the coming of Christ at Christmas.

Invitation to Advent Service of Readings and Carols: Wednesday 16 December

You are invited to attend the Advent liturgy of reading and carols in the School Hall at 7.00pm on Wednesday 16 December. Following Advent readings and carol singing, it is our tradition to serve warm mince-pies, soft drinks and mulled wine. All proceeds raised will be donated to St Gemma's Hospice. I look forward to seeing you and your families there.

Request for Donations to Hampers for the Senior Citizens' Party

Year 10 pupils are busy preparing for our Senior Citizens' Party, to be held on Tuesday 15 December at 12.30pm. A food hamper is provided to those attending. Please consider making a donation of some of the following items: tinned vegetables, tinned fruit, rice, pasta, tinned meat, tinned fish, biscuits, tea, coffee, hot chocolate, mince pies, Christmas cake, Christmas pudding, desserts, custard, soup, sweets, nuts, dried fruit, jam. Raffle prizes are also welcome. Pupils are asked to hand items to tutors. A few places at the party are still available. If you know an elderly person in your community or parish who would enjoy such an occasion, please contact Mrs Nicola Hoyland, Year 10 Manager (887 3240 ext 260). First come, first served.



Reading for Pleasure



The whole school enjoyed another dedicated *Drop Everything and Read (DEAR)* time yesterday afternoon when all pupils and staff spent 30 minutes in silent reading. This activity is part of a national initiative to promote reading within schools. Inspiring a love of reading in our pupils has always been an important aim of the school. Pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 have just embarked upon an entirely new English curriculum. Success in this new programme of study depends upon the ability to read, evaluate and analyse texts effectively. By encouraging your child to read, you will be enabling him or her to access a range of complex texts and supporting progress across the curriculum. Pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 have been given a *Reading Passport* by their English teachers. This document lists four *core texts* that your child will be expected to have read by the end of the school year in July 2016. Each core text will present something new and interesting and will capture the imagination. At times pupils may find elements of the text challenging: this will help them improve their reading ability. Reading the four core texts is a minimum expectation: we hope to see pupils reading many more. The texts are differentiated and suitable for each child's reading ability. We believe that the level of challenge within these texts will enhance and develop reading, literacy, writing, imagination and critical thinking skills. All core texts may be borrowed from our school library. We suggest that local public libraries are used too. Parents may, of course, wish to buy copies of the recommended texts. They are widely available.

and finally...

School ends for the Christmas holidays at 1.30pm on Friday 18 December.

Yours sincerely

E A Cox, Headteacher