8 January 2019

Dear Parents

I hope you had a restful holiday – happy New Year! Over the course of last term, we collected updated email addresses for all families and so it is good to be able to write to you electronically this term. Of course, if your main email address changes, please do let us know. At Christmas, we said a sad goodbye to Miss Stringfellow, the Head of Year 12, a Science teacher and an old girl of the school. We wish her well in her new post in London. We have welcomed in her place in the Science department Mr Dugdale and have welcomed existing member of staff Mrs Winsor to the role of Acting Head of Year 12.

The autumn term was a positive start to Year 8. Many girls received fantastic academic reports, have joined an extra-curricular activity and been involved in many organised events. These included two fantastic Curriculum Enrichment Days: Dragons’ Den and a Refugee Day; House Charity events; House Indoor Athletics; the Shoebox appeal; Roald Dahl Day; the Christmas Cracker – and so much more! I hope that the girls continue to work hard this term and continue to take full advantage of all the wonderful opportunities that the school has to offer.

I will continue to be looking after the year group while Mr Lewis is away. I can be contacted on the school telephone number or on flangford@st-annes.uk.com. Your daughter’s tutor is, of course, the first port of call for you, usually through a message in the logbook.

Key dates this term

Please may I draw your attention to the following key dates this term, further details of which will be communicated as appropriate?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Event** | **Date/time** |
| Careers Fair | Tuesday 29 January, 6-8pm |
| Gymnastics and Dance Showcase | Monday 4 February, 6-7.30pm |
| Parents’ Forum | Wednesday 6 February, 4-5pm |
| Half term | Monday 18-Friday 22 February |
| Ash Wednesday: optional services in school | Wednesday 6 March |
| World Book Day events | Thursday 7 March |
| Curriculum Enrichment Day  | Tuesday 19 March |
| Holy Union Day (Feast Day for the LSU sisters) | Monday 25 March |
| Reports due home | Friday 29 March |
| Easter Concert | Monday 1 April, 7-9pm |
| Born For This: Passiontide Performance | Wednesday 3 April, times TBC |
| Last day of term: early closure | Friday 5 April, 12.30pm |

Pupil welfare

We have created a new email address that is available for all pupils to use if they wish to speak to someone. It is monitored by a member of school staff. Parents are also welcome to use it to contact the school if they are concerned about any aspect of safety. It is safe@st-annes.uk.com.

We continue to be concerned with the number of incidents involving social media and electronic devices. We recognise that these devices are a part of life for young people today but hope that as parents you remain in control of the devices that your daughters use. Most girls do manage their use well but there are an increasing number of problems, including unpleasant messaging, posting of information about others online and isolating pupils from their peer groups by removing them from groups. Please refresh your memory about the age limits for many apps and websites, such as Instagram, Snapchat and Facebook (currently 13) as well as a higher limit for WhatsApp (16 without parental consent). Musical.ly and TikTok have an 18 age limit for creating (or authorising) accounts and 13 for using them. A simple internet search will give you a complete list.

We are finding that what is written online is often not the same as what somebody might be willing to say face-to-face and the younger the pupil is, the less ready she is to deal with the emotional side of dealing with social media. As we do not allow mobile phone use in school, these incidents are taking place out of school, when the children are in the care of parents; as such, we cannot necessarily be involved in their resolution. Where we deem it reasonable, we do get involved in behaviour (online or offline) outside school, usually when the school is directly identifiable or when it has direct repercussions on school. In other cases, if you are concerned about the nature of behaviour affecting your child, please contact the police.

As always, we want the experience of our girls to be happy and positive and developmental so that they can grow into the person their gifts and talents lead them towards.

Curriculum this term

Much of the curriculum contributes to the overall understanding of our young people to personal relationships. Specific topics that might lead to further discussion about inter-personal relationships at home, which have been highlighted by the relevant departments, are shown below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Topic** | **Subject** |
| Ongoing themes discussed | English |
| My character | French |
| Prevent | RE |
| Family | Spanish |

End of the school day

We have written to you regarding both parking and girls’ alertness when crossing roads on several occasions. Some of the text of one of these messages is repeated here for your convenience as we remain concerned.

“Unfortunately we have received a complaint from neighbours regarding parking. Therefore please could we request you ensure you are mindful of other road users and local residents, including avoiding blocking access roads and driveways, as you park and ensure that you park legally.

We would like to remind you that we continue to have concerns about the number of girls who are crossing the road in unsafe places, or while looking at their mobile telephones. The roads around the school site are extremely busy, please ask your daughter to ensure she is not using her mobile phone while crossing the roads and that she is choosing an appropriate place to cross.”

With all good wishes for the term ahead.

Yours sincerely

Mrs F Langford

Acting Head of Year 8