

**HURST MERE  
SCHOOL**



***Parents' Update  
October 2007***

## A REMINDER TO PARENTS THAT SCHOOL IS CLOSED ON FRIDAY 19<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER FOR AN IN-SET DAY

Firstly I would like to welcome everyone, especially our Year 7 parents, to the first Parents' Update of the new academic year. It seems amazing that we are already approaching the end of the first half-term. This half-term is always a frantic period for all staff with 210 new students to settle into secondary school life, in-depth analysis of the previous year's GCSE examination results and, of course, the eleven open mornings for next year's intake.

We are particularly pleased with the way the Year 7's have settled in. They have taken an active part in all sporting and other opportunities offered beyond the usual academic day.

Our previous Year 11 did exceptionally well in their GCSE's, with a headline figure of 73% 5 A\*-C grades and an extremely high contextual value added figure. This is the score for each child's progress from the day they enter the school until the day they leave us and is a crucial indicator for us as year groups vary in ability. This year we will again be back in the top 10% of the school's nationally; we should all be proud of this remarkable achievement.

Our achievements have meant that once again we have been very popular on the open mornings and the boys and staff have shown over 1,500 people around the school. It seems our popularity is growing and growing and I am sure, as always in recent years, many will be very disappointed at not being able to gain entry here.

I hope you will find the other aspects of this newsletter both interesting and informative.

A number of School trips and activities took place at the end of last term and I am pleased to say that they all went well.

**Paris, Year 8's and 9's** - Madame Taylor, Mademoiselle Pressac, Mr Taylor and Mr Syplywczak took a group of boys to Paris for a taster of 'La Vie Parisienne'. The five day trip began with a fireworks display to celebrate Bastille Day. The boys were able to ascend the Eiffel Tower, cruise along the Seine taking in many of the famous landmarks, paddle in the fountains next to the Pyramid in the Louvre and of course, practice their French whilst enjoying a little retail therapy. They also visited the interactive City of Science and Industry and watched the "Dinosaurs" 3D film in the Geode. A fantastic and memorable time was had by all!

**Ardres, France Year 9's** - Mr Corry and his team took 40 of our pupils to France to take part in a water sports activity week. Despite arriving at the camp site during a huge thunder storm, the weather improved and the week was extremely enjoyable. Some of the activities undertaken by the boys were sailing, canoeing, rafting and dragon boat racing. There were also some land-based activities such as archery, fencing and a visit to the local town and market. The response from the pupils was excellent.



**Disneyland, Paris** - Mr Joyce and his team took the Year 10 boys on a trip to Disneyland in Paris. It was a tremendous success and was thoroughly enjoyed by pupils and staff! Day one was spent at the Park and Space Mountain was, without doubt, the main attraction there. Day two was spent at both the Park and Universal Studios: Rock 'n Rollercoaster was the best ride and as there were no queues the boys could go on it time and time again - amazing! The hotel also had a pool which meant the boys could relax after their exhausting days.



**Marchant's Hill, Year 7's** - In a break with tradition our Year 7's, along with Mr Jagniaszek and his team, went to Marchant's Hill in Surrey as opposed to Mersea Island. There was a vast range of activities including quad biking, archery, fencing, trapeze, rifle shooting, zip wire and many, many more! The boys all had the opportunity to try each activity on offer and thoroughly enjoyed themselves. They worked well as a team and some of the boys tried - successfully - to do things they never thought they would be able to do - Well done, boys!!



**Activities Week, Hurstmere School** - Activities week for the boys who didn't go away on a residential trip was as successful as ever. There were a variety of events including a visit from the Army (when the boys were truly put through their paces!), various dance and drama groups came in to work with the boys and, as ever, Eagle Heights - always very popular - made their usual visit. Some of the boys also went out for day trips to try their hands at sailing, paintballing and tree jumping (The last two re-scheduled tree jumping trips took place earlier this term.)

#### **Other News :**

**Kirkland Rowell Questionnaires** - A very good response was received from parents and pupils to our annual surveys. These surveys have now been analysed and points noted for further development. Summaries of the pupil and parents surveys can now be accessed on the school website.

**Jeans for Genes Day** - On our recent non-uniform Jeans for Genes Day we are pleased to announce that the boys and staff raised £750.00 for this very worthwhile charity.

#### **ACADEMIC**

**Touch Type Read and Spell** - Following a very successful pilot scheme with our Year 7 pupils last year, TTRS continues with a pilot this term for parents to work alongside their sons in further developing literacy skills through touch typing. The parent and son sessions are taking place after school for two nights per week, whilst the popular breakfast club for Year 7 and 8 pupils continues, four mornings per week from 07.45 - 08.15.

For further information regarding TTRS please contact the school office.

**Geography** – We will shortly be starting the Year 9 Bronze Award for The Duke of Edinburgh scheme. Any boys interested in taking part should see Miss Adelaide.

On 18<sup>th</sup> October, for Citizenship and Geography, Eagle Heights will once again be coming in to school to give a practical demonstration and talk about the adaptation and environmental conservation.

**Technology Year 7's** – The Year 7 boys have been introduced to technology through a project of designing and making, from scratch, a 'balloon buggy'. As you can imagine the buggies took on many different forms! During the first week of October a series of 'races' were held in the school hall to see whose buggy could go the furthest. Inevitably some didn't move whilst others covered distances of five meters or more. Some of the boys 'over-blew' their balloons and made them pop! Both boys and teachers thoroughly enjoyed this very noisy but entertaining experiment. Certificates and awards will be given out during Year 7 assemblies.

**Drama** – Tickets will shortly be going on sale for the forthcoming production of Bugsy Malone. The show will be held on the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> of December. The cost of the tickets will be £2.00 concessions (oap's and students) and £4.00 for everyone else. We estimate that there will be seating for 100 people each night so book soon if you don't want to miss out on this amazing production! Please see Miss Woodward for further information.

**School Uniform** – Thank you to all parents for ensuring that boys travel to and from school in the correct Hurstmere uniform. As winter approaches, boys and parents are reminded that hooded sweatshirts may not be worn to school, even as a replacement for a coat. Outdoor coats should be of a plain, sober colour, with only small logos. Safety stripes are permissible. We ask parents to ensure that footwear is restricted to black, formal shoes. The current fashionable style which includes 'Velcro' straps is not appropriate. Please remember that stitching and laces should be black. I would also remind parents that boys are not permitted to wear earrings to school and that fashion haircuts with lines or words are not permissible.

**Homework Timetables** - Your son should by now have been given his homework timetable. If any parent is in doubt about this please refer to the Hurstmere School website where full details are set out under the heading Homework Timetables.

**Extra-Curricular Activities** - We have a wide range of opportunities for the boys to take part in after school, ranging from sports to homework club. Please contact the school office if you would like any further information on these.

## **SPORTS NEWS**

**Rugby World Cup Trip to Paris, 2007** - In September, 60 pupils and 6 staff were privileged to get the opportunity to watch the England Rugby team perform, AND WIN, against Tonga in the Rugby World Cup at the Parc de Princes in Paris. All the boys behaved impeccably and the trip was a massive success. Everyone involved had a great time and the P.E. department would like to thank all the boys for their attention and patience throughout the tour.

Mr Wadsworth would like to take this opportunity to give an additional thank you to the Year 11 Rugby team who gave a fantastic interpretation of the 'Haka' at the entrance to Disneyland, much to the amazement and appreciation of the passing tourists! The Year 11 boys have been and continue to be great role models for our younger boys.

**Football** - Good luck to all the teams playing in the various competitions they are competing in. Training after school is as follows :

- Year 7 - Tuesdays
- Year 8 & 9 - Wednesdays
- Year 10 - Thursdays

These days will continue after half term on the astro pitch so remember NO BOOTS.

**Rugby** - A huge warm welcome to Mr Robinson who has joined us as the teacher in charge of rugby. We are hoping that the rugby continues to grow and develop as it has over the last few years. Good luck to all the teams playing in various competitions. Training after school is as follows:

Senior Squad (Years 10 and 11) - Tuesdays

Junior Squad (Years 7, 8 and 9) - Thursdays

**Basketball** - Fixtures will start after October half term. Training will take place at lunchtimes as follows :

Year 7 - Mondays

Year 8 - Fridays

Year 9 - Tuesdays

Year 10 - Wednesdays

Year 11 - Thursdays

## DATES FOR THE DIARY

Thursday 15 <sup>th</sup> November 2007	Year 7 Parents Welcome Evening to meet Form Tutors
Tuesday 27 <sup>th</sup> November 2007	Year 10 Parents Evening
Wednesday 16 <sup>th</sup> January 2008	Year 11 Parents Evening
Thursday 24 <sup>th</sup> January 2008	Year 9 Parents Evening
Tuesday 5 <sup>th</sup> February 2008	Year 9 Options Evening
Wednesday 27 <sup>th</sup> February 2008	Year 8 Parents Evening
Wednesday 19 <sup>th</sup> March 2008	Year 7 Parents Evening