# St John Fisher News

26 April 2013 No. 178

## Study Leave

Students in Years 11-13 are given some time to prepare for exams each year. These days we keep this to a minimum as our experience is that most students revise better at school but in order to accommodate the exams we have to release a lot of rooms. Somewhere between these two intentions we have to strike a balance.

The arrangements for this year are as follows:

**Year 11:** Leavers' Liturgy will be Friday 24 May during periods 2 and 3 with students dismissed at approximately 12.30. The Year 11 Prom is that evening and I am sure that the extra time to prepare will be welcome – for the boys as well as the girls. After this date students are on Study Leave but will be expected to attend some revision lessons: each subject will inform the students taking it when they should attend. When students do come into school they need to be in correct uniform and sign in at reception. Exam boards require students to wear uniform for all examinations.

**Year 12:** most of the exams fall before half term this year so there will not be a defined period of Study Leave. Instead students may stay at home to revise, if they wish, for the morning before an afternoon exam or the afternoon before a morning exam. Again, subject teachers will explain particular arrangements for their subject.

**Year 13:** Leavers' Liturgy during period 4 on Thursday 23 May. Study Leave begins Friday 24 May and students only come into school for exams from then onwards. The Year 13 Prom is on Friday 28 June.

In the meantime exams are already starting and time is quickly running out. On Tuesday afternoon Mr Berry spoke to Year 11 to ensure that they have all of the information they need for this important stage in their education. Students have individual personal exam timetables and it is crucial that these are not lost. I would urge parents to check this daily to make sure that students know when their exams are and what time they start: the start times are quite different to our lesson times, especially for afternoon exams. It is the students' responsibility to arrive on time for each exam – arriving too late or missing it completely automatically means a fail. I would also ask parents to check that students have enough pens and equipment and are not searching for things on the day of the exam.

Finally, we wish all the students good luck. We are expecting another year of improved results, and Year 11 are already on track to break all previous records.

## Key Stage 3 Parents Evening

The next Parents' Evening is on **Tuesday 21 May**, just over three weeks away. Following the very successful evening for Years 10-13 in March we are repeating the format for this event. Students will again be dismissed at 2pm and appointments with teachers will be available from 2.30 - 6.30.

For the March evening we introduced an online booking system through which parents could indicate which teachers they wished to see and indicate the period of time in which they wanted appointments. This will be used again for this evening and parents will be sent letters through the post which explain how to make appointments. The letter also explains what to do if you do not have access to the Internet or cannot make appointments online for some other reason. It does work on a first-come-first-served basis so please do not leave it too late to make appointments.

The only issue at the March evening was the small number of parents who arrived without any appointments and had to then see what was still available when they arrived. At this point they found that some teachers no longer had any spare slots, so please try to make appointments in advance.

## House Masses

Each Tuesday morning we have a Mass at the start of the day. This term we have asked Father Michael to say a Mass for each House, giving the students of the House an opportunity to come together and pray. Last week and this Cambridge and Rochester had their Mass and next week it will be the turn of Beverley House, with Westminster two weeks later. Students from each House are preparing the Mass and doing the readings, and Miss O'Connor is providing music with a small group of singers. We hope that the students benefit from this important aspect of our spiritual work as a school community and are encouraged to undertake a role in the Masses.

## Uniform

This week we have had a blitz on incorrect uniform in order to continue to maintain our high standards. As ever, I would ask parents for support with this. The current issue seems to be the length of girls' skirts which have started getting shorter: skirts should be knee length. Girls may, of course, continue to wear trousers if they wish but these should be the classic style and not the 'skinny' variety. This is the uniform we have had for several years and not a change.

Sean Hayes

## Parent Perception Survey

As an important part of our monitoring and evaluation process, we have sent out a Parent Perception Survey which will help us to identify areas where progress has been made and also areas where we need to improve.

If you have received a survey, (not all parents will have done) please could you take the time to complete and return it to Student Services by Friday 10 May 2013. Thank you. *Mr Reilly*

## Duke Of Edinburgh Award News

Recently the DofE group visited Wakerley Woods for a full day of orienteering and practicing our cooking skills. The aim of the visit was to learn and develop essential skills to be able to go on a practice two day expedition.

We learnt many new skills on this day such as how to pace our walk, how to read maps and how to cook on camping stoves.

Wakerley Woods has a permanent orienteering site with 21 posts located around the woods.

One skill involved working out how many paces we took to cover 100 metres – we could then estimate distances between each hidden post by checking on our maps.

We then worked out we were walking at 3 kilometres an hour. The groups found all the hidden posts in the woods which was very, very challenging! We can now walk on a bearing using a compass and we now have a much better grasp of map reading – we all know where North is!

The group also cooked a substantial meal using our camping stoves. The menu was very varied – some of us even cooked chicken curry with a very tasty sauce and rice. Our DofE students were impeccably behaved, were well prepared and all got "stuck in" and overcame the challenge of very detailed navigational problems. They are a credit to our school.

The next activities planned are a practice expedition in June and in early October the group will be externally assessed by official DofE assessors and a different route/campsite will have to be used. They will then have passed their Bronze expedition.

This group cannot exist without staff help so a big 'Thank You' to our volunteer staff - Mrs Davey and Mr Clifford.

If anyone would like to try orienteering at Wakerley Woods I have many copies of the map for students or staff to borrow so anyone can have a go at orienteering! The woods are only 20 minutes from Peterborough. *Mr Jones, DofE Coordinator*

**Year 8 Spelling Bee ...**

**... 4 weeks to go**

| House Update | Points | Attendance |
|---|---|---|
| Beverley | 12425 | 92.9% |
| Cambridge | 8375 | 93.9% |
| Rochester | 12875 | 92.7% |
| Westminster | 14775 | 93.4% |

## School Bags

As Mr Hayes has already mentioned, we have this week completed a uniform blitz of students. However, it is also important that students have a sensible bag to carry their books and equipment in, to aid their learning. Please could you ensure that your child has a bag which is able to carry exercise books, as well as school equipment. This also includes having their diary every day in order to record homework and to plan their learning. Thank you for your assistance in this matter. *Mr Reilly*

## Beverley House

This week's theme has been Leadership and we have discussed leadership and what this means. It is our aim to use our leadership skills and our abilities to work as a team to win this year's School Cup. This is something we are not far from achieving already, with many opportunities to prove just how good a House we are.

On **Tuesday 30 April** we will celebrate our House Mass in the school hall. Mass will begin at 8:45 am.

*Mr J Hayes, Head of Beverley House*

Year 11 Prom Friday 24 May

Tickets £15 Student Services

On sale from Monday 29 April

## The Carnegie Reading Group

The Carnegie Reading Group will take place in the Library each Wednesday from 3.30 – 4.30 pm. The first meeting is on Wednesday 1st May. Please ask at the Library for further information.

Refreshments provided!

*Miss Oldman, Librarian*

**Library Word of the Week: Serendipity**

**The occurrence and development of events by chance in a happy or beneficial way**