

FORUM (PASTORAL) FOR COLLEGE PARENTS

THURSDAY 21 SEPTEMBER 2017

1. Sports Kit (Fourth Year)

- 1.1. *HM was approached by a Fourth Year boy to question why there is no 'A' Team Sports Kit in recognition of sporting achievement. What is the parent feedback on this? (HM)*
- 1.2. I have two sons, in Upper Sixth and Third Year and they are disappointed that there is no recognition of sporting achievement (vs academic recognition) at the College. It also shows a lack of professionalism.
- 1.3. There is recognition for the first teams in Cricket and Rowing with a blazer – why not for Rugby or Hockey? These sports need something to aspire to as well!
- 1.4. Netball first team also has a specific dress and skirts.
- 1.5. As I parent I am happy to advocate the same kit throughout the school. Representing the school is an accolade in itself and different kit separates teams – and is expensive! However, there does not seem to be any logic to the College sport kit.
- 1.6. *Thank you for your comments – these will be passed back to the Fourth Year student and the senior team for further review. (HM)*

2. Mobile Phones

- 2.1. *There has been a great deal of coverage about use of mobile phones by schools recently, including Brighton College and Gordon's who have both removed 'phones. SGC has this year, introduced a First Year mobile 'phone ban which has been a great success. As a result, at a recent Head of Year meeting, it was proposed that the ban be extended up the school to the Third Year. What are parents' thoughts on this? (HM)*
- 2.2. Mobile 'phones were discussed at the recent 'Meet the Teacher' evening and it was agreed by most that this should be extended, to encourage children to talk to each other. Roll the ban through from First through to Second and Third Years please!
- 2.3. The main issue is not allowing access to 'phones but how they are used.
- 2.4. *Agreed – this is why mobiles were not banned initially – it was felt that parents did not feel strongly enough to enforce a ban. (HM)*
- 2.5. Since the 'phones were banned, my son in the First Year has been very happy – it has been a learning curve. I would encourage a ban up to the Third Year!
- 2.6. With a son in the Fifth Year and a Third Year daughter, I've noticed there is a huge difference of use of 'phones between girls and boys. I would be happy if 'phones were not available at school at all!
- 2.7. Why stop use from Third Year and do a full ban at the College?

2.8. *It would be extremely difficult to ban 'phones within the Sixth Form who are given privileges and more responsibility as they reach the top of the school (similar to use of make-up and jewellery). Sixth Formers are entrusted to self-police use of 'phones. (HM)*

2.9. With a son in the First Year, I would be interested to know if the College blocks social media?

2.10. *Yes, the SGC network filters and monitors all social media on-site as part of our safeguarding measures. Whatsapp, Instagram etc. are blocked. If a student – and staff members - try to access them, SLH as DH Pastoral, receives an alert and the student is blocked. The current system is a Prevent & Care Package which is a general one. SGC will be moving to Smoothwall which is education specific. There was a recent meeting with Iain Turner, DH Pastoral at JS to list sites to be blocked on our network. Students are aware of this system (although some staff forget!). (SLH)*

2.11. This ban is good to hear – until a student is mature enough to learn how to use social media appropriately, this system is very important.

3. Tutor Groups

3.1. *There have been changes made to Tutor Groups in the First Year. As in the Third Year, dual tutoring (with two Tutors per group), has been introduced in the First Year. This has been possible due to the number of new staff this year and means that a closer eye can be kept on students with a 1/10 ratio, similar to prep school ratio. (SLH)*

3.2. Do the students keep the same Tutors up to Fifth Year?

3.3. *Yes, they will keep one Tutor from Third Year to Fifth Year; First and Second Year also keep the same tutor for these two years . (SLH).*

4. House System

4.1. *Two new Houses (King and Woburn, based traditionally on the names of the previous owners) have been introduced from this September, raising the total from 4 to 6 Houses. 4 new Heads of Houses have been interviewed and appointed this week. They are enthusiastic about the new system and looking forward to a 'shake up' of the system! There will be approx. 160 in each House and there will be vertical grouping from Sixth Form to Middle School to Lower School working together. Mrs Hall, AH Pastoral, is in charge of the re-organisation and has been checking each Tutor Group to ensure that students are happy to move/stay in their same House. Staff (both Teaching and Business) have also been consulted. The re-launch is due to take place from Half Term and we are very excited with this new positive opportunity! (SLH)*

4.2. Have Colours for the new Houses been decided? Will there be 'House tops' similar to the Junior School?

4.3. *Good question! This is all still under development – we will keep you posted! (HM)*

5. Mentor System

5.1. As a new parent, I am interested to know about the Mentor system at the College?

- 5.2.** *Sixth Formers are allocated as Mentors to new First or Third Year students. These Mentors are carefully chosen following a due process and they must apply for the role. The system is run overall by Head Mentors in the Sixth Form. This is a relaxed, natural system and the Lower School students are expected to know their Mentors. (SLH)*
- 5.3.** *As a Second Year parent, whilst this is a positive system, I accept that this can be improved – for instance, the Mentors are to a certain extent allocated according to ‘pot luck’ and could perhaps be better done (e.g. by gender). (HM)*
- 5.4.** *If the Mentors are linked to the new House set-up, this may made the system more ‘natural’.*
- 5.5.** *Yes, point taken, although we currently have a new Peer Support Network on Firefly which is working well. This is a Sixth Form initiative whereby students can communicate by email if they are experiencing issues/problems. Sixth Formers are given training to hold drop-in sessions, e.g. regarding revision issues and give advice (with support from the pastoral team). The school Counsellor is also involved. (SLH)*
- 5.6.** *Would the College consider providing ‘Mindfulness’ to students?*
- 5.7.** *We are aware if this and there is a lunchtime ‘Mindfulness’ club run by a Head of Year together with a ‘Well-being’ blog. However, the pastoral team wish this to be introduced carefully and for it to be done well and not rushed. (SLH)*
- 5.8.** *It’s also worth mentioning that all students take part in Tutor Group ‘Act of Worship’ each morning which is about 10 minutes of prayer and thoughtfulness and a calm environment to start the day. It’s a good time to reflect, even if they don’t pray! (HM)*
- 5.9.** *Would Mindfulness be introduced for Sport events or exam revision?*
- 5.10.** *Yes, this is a good point! It is part of the Retreats in each year group which are run by the Chaplaincy team. Both Chaplaincy Assistants are an integral part of the team being approachable and very ‘down to earth’. (HM)*

6. Bullying

- 6.1.** *Following feedback from the ISI Inspection Questionnaire, a new system has been set up on Firefly giving students the opportunity to report incidents of bullying which have been either directed at themselves, or at others. A student can access a form via the Bullying link which is completely confidential. The form asks when the incident took place, where, type of bullying and importantly, what action the student wishes to take next (counsellor, staff support, support network). This has been received well and there have been two incidents resolved since its launch. (SLH)*
- 6.2.** *It’s important to note that whilst a student is not required to provide a name, SLH as DH Pastoral will be made aware as it will come from the student’s email address. This means whilst there is no pressure, the child can be monitored and relevant teacher informed. (SLH)*
- 6.3.** *Are all the children aware of this Bullying report on Firefly?*
- 6.4.** *Yes, they have been informed at Assembly and by Group Tutors (SLH)*

7. Terrorism Threat

- 7.1. I would like to commend both staff and the students involved in the recent 'photo incident during the Hockey Sixes this term. How does security prevention at SGC compare to other schools?
- 7.2. *Yes, we are very proud of the Second Year students and staff who stopped a visitor from taking photos (for use in a sports tour brochure) recently. It is an example of good practice in Safeguarding. Second Year parents were informed, but as far the College was concerned it was a 'non-incident'. (SLH)*
- 7.3. *An Emergency Planning Exercise, organised by Barry Bishop, Head of Health & Safety, is taking place for all the senior teams (both teaching and business) this month, and this also took place last year. This exercise tests various incidents that could take place from fire, bomb alert to lockdown, and how we take care of the children with as little panic as possible. (HM)*
- 7.4. *Prevention is a key focus; a current parent is linked to this area and was able to alert both the College and Junior School about the recent Parsons Green incident and Sunbury. The site also has 24 hour CCTV system (to monitor traffic). Swipe card entry has been introduced this year to provide greater security for children (no access for students after 6pm). Lanyards for all staff are now compulsory for easy identification. (HM)*
- 7.5. *Good Practice has also been discussed with other Trinity School Heads at the Summer Term meeting, in particular the London based schools such as KCS Wimbledon. There were discussions with Emanuel regarding security door wedges – we share good practice. (HM)*
- 7.6. The College handled the photo incident extremely well; should this be shared with other students and staff as an example of good practice?
- 7.7. *Security is a priority and under constant consideration and we do cover this with students. However, to refer to this particular event is felt to be 'too close, too soon'. (SLH)*
- 7.8. *One of the main strengths of our school is our sensible, secure children who are confident to approach unknown adults and aware of the importance of security on-site! (HM)*

If there are any further concerns or questions which have not been raised at tonight's Forum, please don't hesitate to contact Rachel Owens by email: headmistress@stgeorgesweybridge.com.

The next Forum for College Parents will take place on 21 November and Rachel Owens will be joined by Francesca May as DH Academic to discuss **Academic** issues at the College.