



From the Headmaster, Mark Ronan BA

24 September 2009

Dear Parents and Guardians

It has been a fine start to the school year, both with the beautiful autumnal weather and with the addition to the school of two superb new facilities, the Sixth Form Centre and the Changing Room block.

The school welcomes all our new pupils and the following new staff: Mr Gareth Hughes (Head of History); Mrs Jane Iddon (History); Mrs Judith Hall (Art); Mrs Ellie Girling (Drama); Ms Julie Craggs (Learning Support); Mrs Jennifer McDowell (Chemistry); Miss Hannah McNelly (Classics); Mrs Rose Woodhead (Counsellor); Miss Harriet Smith (Evening Matron, St John's House); Mrs Natalia Ward (Library Assistant); Mrs Megan Godden (Boarding Assistant); Mr Richard Bartle (Transport Assistant); Mlle Stephanie Perreau (French Assistante).

I am very grateful to all the staff and pupils who took part in various activities over the summer holidays: CCF Army and RAF summer camps; the Swing Band tour to Rome, where our pupils had an impromptu encounter with Colonel Gaddafi and received praise from the initially sceptical nuns who hosted them; a Sixth Form Namibia adventure which included building a school playground; the Lower School house camp to the Isle of Wight and the Senior Girls' Hockey tour to Edinburgh. Also, throughout the summer Abbie Brant played with the England U16 Girls' Hockey team in competitions in Ireland, Scotland and Germany, playing with great distinction and proving a great credit to the school. Congratulations are also due to Sophie Duncan on her richly deserved selection to the Leeds Carnegie National Netball Talent Squad who will all be training in preparation for England trials later in the year. Michael McKinstry completed his 192 mile cycle ride across Massachusetts in aid of a cancer charity, whilst Joe Bevan has had a short film selected for the Bradford Film Festival. Finally, Mr Spruyt successfully completed the Swiss Iron-Man competition.

Enclosed with this mailing is a letter from the Deputy Head, Andrew Dawes, giving details of a new initiative in communication with parents by email. I would like to commend this initiative to you and hope that parents and guardians will appreciate regular emailed updates on school matters. Please also continue to keep an eye on the website for news and information on Pocklington School and Lyndhurst School. Mr Dawes has also written giving an update on the swine flu situation. There is also a letter from Dr Dyson referring to pastoral matters. Following the positive introduction of a new reporting system for the Lower Sixth last year and to provide continuity with the reporting system in Lyndhurst, we will be introducing a new reporting system for pupils in the 1st to 4th Years, and in 2010/11 5th Year pupils will also be included. Mr Webb, Director of Teaching and Learning, will be writing to you later this term to explain the new approach to assessment and reporting. In summary, we wish to provide pupils and parents with more detail in respect to development of skills and approach to learning in each subject.

The Bursar wishes to update you on three matters:

- Theatre and Recital Tickets. As the popularity of our theatre productions grows, so does the demand for tickets. To help with administration and to ensure that we accommodate as many requests as possible, we will be introducing a system that allows the cost of tickets to be added to the school bill. With each notification of forthcoming productions there will be a tear-off request slip. We ask that you return the signed slip and, unless a request is accompanied by cash, we will add the cost of the tickets to that term's school bill. If a request slip is not received signed by a parent, pupils will be allowed to sign for up to 5 tickets only.
- Insurance. Parents may recall that they receive an insurance brief at the time when their first child enters the Foundation. In these uncertain times you may care to revisit your provision. Parents might like to consider insurance for the following: fees (to cover absence from school and loss of income), medical treatment (personal accident cover is different and covered in the fee) and personal property. As you know, the Foundation cannot accept any responsibility for loss of or damage to personal property. You can, however, obtain an extension to your home contents insurance or take separate cover for belongings. Unfortunately, many home policies will only pay out if there has been forcible entry - this is not always the case with losses within a school. Many children now have costly portfolios of electronic equipment and it is apparent that extensions to home contents insurance may not provide adequate cover. Details of suitable cover will be available from your broker or can be obtained from the School Accountant who has details of some schemes that are available.

- Vehicle Exit from Dolman Drive. The Foundation is shortly to receive its School Transport Plan from the East Riding Council. We are grateful to the many parents who responded to the survey earlier this year (the best response rate in the county). One of the most common suggestions to improve road safety and to ease congestion on West Green concerned a 'No Right Turn from Dolman Drive' rule at peak times. This rule was imposed when the new car park was being constructed and worked well, significantly protecting staff and pupils using the zebra crossing. We will re-introduce the rule on the day after the first exeat, Monday 5 October between 0815 and 0845hrs Monday to Saturday and 1530-1630hrs Monday to Friday. We thank you in advance for your co-operation.

I continue to be indebted to the commitment of pupils, teaching staff and support staff alike, which was reflected in a card that I received today from parents who visited the school last week:

Your staff were very supportive and very enthusiastic about Pocklington School. All the children were very happy, well behaved and well turned out. Our daughter was particularly taken with the live animals in the Biology Lab. This was a huge plus in her decision to attend your school; we hope there are still animals in the lab in 2011. Our son liked the sports field and the swimming pool. I was impressed by the facilities and work ethic by both staff and pupils.

Clearly there will be times when some children are not happy, well behaved or well turned out. However, we at Pocklington continue to be committed to maintaining high expectations for our pupils and staff; and where we can be better please do let us know.

Finally, Fiona and I completed the 192 mile Coast to Coast walk from St Bees to Robin Hood's Bay over the summer holidays. A Dutch couple who we met along the walk reminded me of how fortunate we are to live in the British Isles, in spite of our unpredictable summer!

Yours,

Mark Ronan