



The Crypt School

Newsletter – March 2010

Dear Parents,

Spring finally seems to be in the air, as I write this newsletter, and thank goodness! It's not that I dislike winter. I don't even begrudge the students the odd snow day, although we have had too many of these days in the past two years. No, it is more the sight of the heating bill that we have received that is making me hope that the winter of 2010-2011 sees a return to normality, and I'm sure we all echo that thought as we consider our home heating costs this winter.

My personal highlight of 2010 to date has to be the school ski trip to the USA, with 130 students and 14 members of staff. The weather conditions were fantastic for skiing, if a little on the cold side, and excellent progress was made by all. Our hosts in Lincoln were impressed with the students' excellent behaviour and friendly attitude. The trip was made all the more special by incorporating a short stay in New York before the flight home. I shall never forget the site of 130 students descending from our coaches as we arrived somewhat late for dinner in Manhattan, and then marching hurriedly the 10 blocks or so to Times Square's Hard Rock Cafe. We all made it, with no drama, and enjoyed a wonderful meal. Risk assessment? The risk of going hungry focussed minds, and ensured that everyone kept up and no-one got lost! My thanks go to Mr Barrington for his hard work, and to all the members of staff who helped to make this a holiday that will be remembered for a lifetime.

It is time once again for us to survey parental and student opinion. We will shortly send home the surveys, which will be independently analysed by Kirkland Rowell, a leading company in this field. This survey is very important, and helps to inform the school improvement plan. In particular, the "free writing" section gives me a very good impression of what parents and students value most, and most want to change or improve. This will be our third Kirkland Rowell survey. The first in December 2007 recorded an overall judgement of "good" and the second in 2009 showed that parents overall believed we were just "outstanding." My judgement of the school in 2010 is shared by the School Improvement Partner – that results indicate we are outstanding in the main school (years 7-11) and good in the VI form. I hope you will be able to agree overall with this. We certainly are not complacent, and welcome your opinions on what we need to do to improve still further. I shall report the results fully in our next newsletter.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'J P Standen'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J'.

J P Standen
Headmaster



We are most grateful to parents who have returned their Parentmail data forms. We are starting to use Parentmail for communicating to parents and will use it more in the future. We hope that you have noticed the benefit of receiving all letters sent home, as soon as they are sent out, rather than them languishing at the bottom of a rucksack!

If you haven't returned a data form we will be sending these out to you, with a stamped addressed envelope. Please return them as soon as possible.

If you have any comments on Parentmail – positive or negative – please let us know to swales@crypt.gloucs.sch.uk so that we can improve the communication between school and parents.

Requests from Mr. Barrington, Head of PE :

Does anyone have access to or contacts for an unwanted container? It will be used to store cricket equipment used to prepare the square. This will assist in enhancing the use of the pavilion along with relieving us of storage issues. Any size would be most welcome!



We are looking for potential sponsors for the 1st and 2nd XV Rugby teams. The sponsors will have their name on the shirts or shorts. The students play in fixtures across the county and are watched by many parents and staff from these schools.

If anyone would like to discuss either of the above further please contact Mr Barrington, Head of Physical Education : mbarrington@crypt.gloucs.sch.uk

Letters will be sent home shortly inviting parents to an Information Evening on Cyberbullying and internet safety. The date is **Thursday, 6th May at 7.00 a.m. Please put it in your diary!**

Haiti Plea :

Touched by all the pain and suffering the Haitian people are experiencing right now, I have decided to take on the mammoth task of running 3 marathons in 3 weekends!

My journey will start at Brighton on the 18th April, followed by London on the 25th April and then flying to Belfast for the final 26.2 miles on the 3rd May. This tragedy has ruined millions of lives and left 10's of thousands of families without loved ones and little hope of ever being able to rebuild their lives!!! If the small amount of pain and suffering I will encounter on my journey could help raise money to ease this suffering then it will be well worth every step of the 78.6 miles of road I will pound! Dig deep into your pockets and give generously for this very needy cause!! Follow my progress with regular updates on this page or on my facebook page! Many Thanks. To donate please go on the 'Just Giving' website, enter Anne-Marie Willcott and click on the Marathon Link.

Anne-Marie Willcott – parent of a year 7 student.



UCAS

Getting In Early...

As you may be aware, the majority of students who leave us at the end of Year 13 will head off to further studies at universities. The procedure for getting into university has not really changed in recent years, although the whole process is now completed electronically and online.

So, for those not in the know, what exactly is UCAS? Well, rather than apply direct to a university, all university applications are made via UCAS - the Universities and College Admissions Service. It is the government agency that processes all university applications in the UK.

UCAS has a number of deadlines: if applying to Oxford or Cambridge, or for specific courses such as those in medicine, dentistry or veterinary studies, applications must be with UCAS by 15 October of the academic year before students wish to begin their studies (in other words, in the autumn term of Year 13). If applying for courses other than these, applications must be submitted to UCAS by 15 January (the spring term of Year 13). It is worth noting that this the latest deadline for applications and that most university admissions tutors will start considering applications and offering places from much earlier than this. Consequently, Crypt's own deadline is much sooner.

Students cannot officially start their on-line UCAS application until the September of Year 13. At Crypt we get things started well before that, which is particularly important in the current economic climate where we regularly hear about reduced funding for universities and fewer places available for students wishing to apply. Within the first few weeks of beginning Year 12, we begin talking to the students about how they can best prepare themselves for their application to university: what can they do over the next year or so to make their UCAS personal statement better than the rest? We also encourage them to start thinking about possible courses almost from day one.

As an early part of their preparation, we recently took all of Year 12 to a UCAS convention at the UWE in Bristol. Over 200 universities, employers and trainers were present and our lower sixth were able to pick up prospectuses and ask a range of questions about locations, institutions and courses – as well as collecting as many freebies as possible!

September 2009 Onwards	University application process discussed with Y12 students in PE lessons.
February 2010	Senior Leadership Team conducts preliminary interviews with prospective Oxbridge / Russell Group applicants Open University YASS meeting and subsequent applications
February 25th 2010	Y12 Oxbridge Information Evening
March 19 th 2010	Y12 students to UCAS Convention, BUWE
March 25 th 2010	Oxbridge Conference, Cardiff
April 2010	HE (PowerPoint) presentation to all Y12 students by Head of Sixth Form.
June/July 2010	UCAS system goes live for schools. Crypt UCAS Administrator sets up Crypt system and issues passwords and usernames to staff. All Y12 students register with the UCAS on-line system.
w/c Mon. 28 th June 2010 (Arts Week)	Y12 UCAS workshops – including issuing of UCAS guidance booklet UCAS workshops: application process, personal statements, Oxbridge, early-entry courses, student finance workshop careers guidance etc. (run by Head of Sixth Form, Deputy Headmaster, HoD PE, Sixth Form Academic Tutor, visiting speakers). Y12 Parents HE Briefing (evening) in school led by Head of Sixth Form
June - August 2010	Staff draft/write subject and tutor references Students use July/August to complete their UCAS forms/undertake relevant work experience etc. Students register for any relevant tests – LNAT, UKCAT etc.
September & October 2010 Students	Student Deadline 1 – Monday 20th September – all Priority Group (Oxbridge/Russell Group/Medicine/Vet. etc.) applications to be submitted to Head of Sixth Form/Deputy Headmaster Student Deadline 2 - by end of Term 1 – all other UCAS forms to be submitted to Head of Sixth Form / Deputy Head. Curriculum suspension week - UCAS support sessions.
September & October 2010 Staff	Staff Deadline 1 – Monday 27th September – all priority group applicants' references to be completed. Staff Deadline 2 – end of Term 1 - all other references (Tutors & Teachers) completed - all UCAS applications submitted
November & December 2010	Oxford/BMAT Tests in school Mock interviews for Oxbridge/Medicine etc. applicants
January 14 th 2011	UCAS official deadline for submission of applications.

The Headmaster recently attended a meeting at UCAS in Cheltenham. The increased competition for university places was plain to see from the statistics. UCAS predict that competition will continue to be fierce in the current economic climate, with more mature candidates seeking places. In addition unsuccessful candidates from last year are more likely to apply, and there are also more candidates from overseas. In this climate it is imperative that Crypt students complete their applications by the October half term deadline.

We will continue to keep you informed of important deadlines and of ways in which parents can support students throughout the process. We will also write to you to invite you to the Year 12 Parents Higher Education Briefing in Arts Week. We know that applying to university can seem daunting, for students and parents alike, especially if it's your first time. We will make the process clear and straightforward but if you have any questions in the meantime please telephone me or email at mbrough@crypt.gloucs.sch.uk

M. Brough
Assistant Headteacher 14-19

Would your family enjoy introducing someone from another country to the British way of life?

There are international students from all over the world at universities in the UK, who would love to spend a weekend sharing your family life. You could have fun introducing them to British food, customs, your local community and area. And you would learn about their countries and culture too.

HOST is a national charity, backed by the Foreign Office, which has been linking students with volunteer hosts for many years. See www.hostuk.org or call Lynette Chappin, the voluntary organiser for Gloucestershire, on 02920 693903.