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## Principal's Newsletter

8 October 2021

Dear Parents,

Last weekend began with wine and wisdom, the music department fundraiser. The famous cheese boards were laden down, and the quiz with its fiendish questions kept the crowds amused. One of the best things about school now as opposed to let's say a year ago, is the full presence of artistic endeavour in every part of the school.

Choir, orchestra, plays, chamber choir and the Halliday Jones Art Gallery, our on-line exhibition space, are all humming along nicely. The first major performance in years will be at Founders' Day next Friday when the College briefly invades the cathedral grounds and the nearby hostelrys afterwards. We have sent you an email about Founders' Day which all pupils in Years 3-13 are required to attend unless they have been excused for a specific religious or other reason.

We are blessed to have art teachers who are artists. Ms Hardisty still works countless hours in her studio, and now I have received notice of Mr Madonna's (surely the greatest name for an art teacher ever) exhibition on the Wirral. You can read a review [here](#). My regret is that the exhibition has finished but I am informed we can look forward to the first photography exhibition, produced by pupils who choose photography as their activity, in the Halliday Jones gallery after half term.

The boarders went cultural last weekend also. They visited the central library, receiving the tour, and getting library cards. Several boarders then proceeded to check out a great number of books. The habit of reading is not universally established in the school. In Prep, books seem to be devoured and it is not uncommon to bump into a pupil trying to read while walking down the hallway. This open display of devotion to reading is less frequent in the secondary phase but there also, there are places where a pupil is immersed in a book. When I ask pupils whether they are currently reading a book for pleasure about half the hands go up. There is no doubt that the habit of reading is nurtured by parents reading themselves. A study in the United States has revealed that more important than visits to libraries or even gifts of books in inspiring reading in pupils is the reading habits of their parents. If you read, your child will read. If your child reads, they will do well in school. It seems a simple equation.

The Liverpool Classical Association visited us last week also as Dr Stephe Harrop delivered a talk on Homeric Orality and Contemporary Performance. It is wonderful that our classics hub, which began so small, is now sending pupils to Oxbridge and other universities, attracting pupils from all sorts of schools to Saturday Greek Academy, and now able to bring all those interested in classics together for lectures.

About 1500 people are coming tomorrow to take the banding test for Year 7 entry. We also have some sports fixtures taking place. The sheer variety of activity at the school makes us worry about the quality of communication with you about them. We are determined to return to a consistent use of the school app as a "real time" way of reminding you of various things which relate to your child. It is imperative that you download the app if you can. We are going to try to wean ourselves off the habit of writing you many emails, instead notifying and signposting you through the app. Please download the app, please choose your category and group so that you are kept informed. You can access more information about how to download and use the app [here](#). Our goal is the minimization of emails home and the maximization of actionable and timely information for you and your child. Our pupils have already been encouraged to download the app.

I want to thank the PTA for their wonderful generosity over the last few years. Their gifts have primarily been directed toward an improvement in our IT equipment and infrastructure. The results are everywhere visible. In Ms Ware's Year 1 class, the entire class uses an iPad to learn more quickly and at levels of individualised challenge. There are more computers and more laptops in better working order than at any other time. We have been able to make some "underground" and system changes which mean that our systems are more reliable, dependable and faster with greater capacity for expansion. Your generosity has made this possible.

Now Ms Cassidy and I are interested in engaging with the parent voice as we undertake a review of our uniform policies and practices. The reality is that our curriculum is so kinetic and so varied that pupils are increasingly needing to come to school not only in school uniform but also in what can best be described as activewear. This is not, in our view, sufficiently standardized and planned, especially in the secondary phase. It will be good to hear parental views about how we can continue to develop our uniform policy so it is high quality, good value, and looks smart. We will hold a meeting about this which any parent is welcome to attend on Thursday 21 October at 5.30pm (venue to be confirmed).

May I wish you a dry and sunny weekend.

**Yours sincerely,**

**Mr H van Mourik Broekman**  
**Principal**