

Dear Parents

Where has the term gone? I can't believe this is the last letter I will write to you this academic year. Our time at school seems to get busier and busier, and I am grateful to you all, for your constant support of what we are trying to achieve for your children.

I regretted not having the opportunity to speak to some of you at our annual Senior Prizegiving ceremony. I had wanted to talk about the recent tendency of the media to treat the work of independent schools with scorn, whilst simultaneously seeking to share their DNA more widely. It is a disappointing and one-dimensional viewpoint, to what is a complex educational system. I wanted to take the opportunity to tell you that whilst we, at WGS, take our responsibility to educate your children to the highest standard seriously, we also play an important role in our community and in the city of Wolverhampton. I am not just referring to our being one of the major city employers, or indeed our pull as a purchaser with a demonstrable commitment to buying local.

Our staff and students rightly give themselves to serving the local community, whether through charitable fundraising, community service, or partnership agreements. For example, you have helped us donate significantly to local charities including the Wolverhampton Food Bank and Haven Project and a huge number of local state primary children have attended inspirational author events hosted at WGS this academic year. Indeed, local librarians are trained at WGS' Regional Librarians' Network, enabling them to engage children in their own libraries, in a range of reading and literacy activities.

These are just a few examples of service to the community, given willingly. Our people understand and play their part in society. It disappoints me that the national press and politicians would seek to undermine and trivialise work that is beneficial to so many. If you would like to know more, then have a look at our local, national and international impact statement, by following this link: <https://wgs.org.uk/school-life/in-the-community/>

Community work aside, this year has been remarkable. Six science laboratories have been completely refurbished now – with another Biology Lab undergoing the same treatment this Summer, alongside reconditioning of the Sixth Form Library. Your children have competed at local, national and international sport in a whole range of disciplines. Students and staff have travelled to extraordinary destinations including Berlin, Spain, Austria, France, Macau and Dubai and have created their own digital revolution, winning awards and future proofing their potential. Happily too, our school continues to grow, as more and more families choose us as the independent school of choice. You, our parents, have embraced every opportunity with great trust and conviction. Thank you.

And what of the staff who make these opportunities a reality? July is, for a teacher, the natural point at which to retire or embrace the next adventure. David Matkin, temporary teacher in OpAL, leaves us after a successful one-year contract; Ryan Lovatt, outstanding physicist, who cut his teaching teeth at our school is returning to his native Manchester; Jonathan Hall dynamic English Teacher, football coach and pastoral leader, leaves us to take up a senior management position at Oswestry School - no doubt we will see him at future sports fixtures! Jim Ryan, who has taught in the OpAL department for some 15 years will be a great loss when he retires this week. Many students have benefitted from his expert guidance and few rugby players will forget the expertise and enthusiasm he has brought to the school game; Russell Charlesworth leaves us after 22 years as Head of History, to teach at Wolverhampton Girls' High School; Andy Carey who has led the Chemistry Department for some 25 years, inspiring a love of the subject in hundreds of students, moves to Newport High School for Girls; and finally Mark Benfield retires after 31 years at WGS. He has been Head of Sixth

Form and most recently and successfully a brilliant Head of English. No one who has seen one of the Lower School Play productions, would doubt his ability as a producer and director either. I know he will continue to be a familiar face at school productions and reunions.

Of course with retirement and pastures new, opportunities arise for new and existing staff. As is customary, I attach for your information brief details of all the new teaching staff who will be joining us in September. I also want to congratulate existing staff members Mark Payne and Ryan Pounder who, after a competitive recruitment process are promoted to be Heads of the English and Chemistry Departments respectively.

More immediately, the next edition of *The Independent* will hit your door mats next week, filled with the latest news of junior and senior school activities. You will also receive an email shortly detailing the current contact and medical information that we hold for your child. We write annually to all parents to confirm that the information on our student records database is correct. I know that checking it is rather dull, but would ask that you treat it as important, because in the event of a serious incident, we must be in possession of accurate medical data and be able to contact you.

On a lighter note, term dates until the Summer of 2020 are posted on the School website and Parent Portal, however don't forget that next year's May Bank Holiday has moved to Friday 8th May to mark the anniversary of VE Day.

For now though, I do hope you enjoy your summer and look forward to welcoming you back in September.

With all good wishes

Kathy Crewe-Read
Head