



Downend School

Downend School

Newsletter 7

April 2011

Dear Parents and Carers

Governor's News

I would like to update you on the current situation regarding the appointment of a new Headteacher for our school.

Over the last two weeks students and staff have been involved in showing prospective candidates around the school and, following this, we have had a really positive response, receiving a total of thirty-five applications. The quality of the advertisement and information pack, and the great welcome given by all to those who have visited the school has clearly made a huge impact on candidates – so thank you to all staff and students involved. A selection committee of governors has short listed those that we would like to invite to interview over three days from 5th to 7th April. As soon as an appointment is confirmed the governors will advise parents, carers and students.

I would also like to welcome two new governors. Mrs Tina Hanks - Staff governor and Mrs Marcia Stewart who has filled a Local Authority vacancy.

Sue Sheath
Chair of Governors

Downend Parent/ Carer/ Student Survey

Over the next term we are conducting a survey to students, parents, carers and staff to gain an insight into what we are doing well and what we need to do to improve. The school will be using a nationally recognised company to analyse our results which we will feedback towards the end of the summer term. Key dates for distribution of the survey are: Student – Friday 6 May. Parent/carer – Monday 9 May.

Mobile phone policy and Uniform update

Across the school tutors and teachers have been reinforcing our expectations in terms of behaviour.

Our focus on the mobile phone policy has made a huge difference. I attach a copy of this policy to the newsletter as an additional link.

We are also reminding students of our expectations in terms of uniform during tutor time and through assemblies before Easter. We will be checking this thoroughly after the Easter break and those students not conforming will need to address the problem and parents will be contacted by. I thank you in advance for your support in this matter.

Exams

We will soon be entering our very busy examination season. All students have received a copy of their exam timetables and full details are also on our website. It is important that students prepare well for the exams and arrive in good time with all the correct equipment.

Easter revision programme

With Easter being late, term 5 is very short and we are hoping as many students as possible will attend the revision sessions. **Full details are on the website.**

Year 11 Parents for Learning Evening

On the 15 March we held a meeting for parents/carers of those students who would benefit from extra support in English and Maths. They attended workshops with the students in English and Maths and the evening proved very informative and received very positive feedback from those who attended.

Modern Foreign Language Department

Our MFL faculty have won joint first prize for Learning Innovation Story making in French. This is a fantastic achievement for the school and following a visit from a journalist we are hoping there will be an article published in the national press.

Concorde Book Award Ceremony

We hosted this event on Wednesday 16 March. The Guest of Honour at the evening was the children's author Chris Higgins. The book that won was *'Knife'* by R.J.Anderson. This is a Canadian author so she kindly sent the school an acceptance speech on video which was shown during the evening. Photographs of the event can be viewed on our website

PTA – Forthcoming Event

PLANT SALE - Saturday 14 May 10.00-12.00 to be held at Downend School. Refreshments will be available throughout the morning. We would welcome donations of plants, flowers, seedlings from Thursday 12 May. Please bring into main reception. Thank you.

Next PTA meeting is Monday 9 May 6.30pm in the LRC. Everyone is welcome.

37th Kingswood Scouts Cadet Band

This group is currently recruiting new cadets from the Downend area. If you are interested in joining, more information can be found on their website www.37thcadets.btck.co.uk or please telephone Nick Hibbs, Corps Director on 07956 255419

The Playhouse – Weston-super-Mare

There will be a fantastic opportunity for young people to become involved in their Summer Youth Project – *FAME – the Musical*. They will be running an intensive course for young people age 9-22 during the first two weeks in August – culminating in five full scale performances of this high energy musical.

To get involved the young people need to attend an audition on Sunday 15 May at the Playhouse Theatre and an application form must be completed. Please contact them on 01934 645544 or by logging on to their website www.loganwest.co.uk. (We have also been given some application forms which can be collected from student reception).

Maths Faculty

Year 9 students have made contact with a school in Malaysia and are measuring shadows in order to estimate the circumference of the Earth. They enter their results into a website and work with other schools around the world to estimate the answer. Mr Elliot's class have made links with a school in Malaysia and are now creating pen pal links with the students.

Post 16 Trip - Washington and New York

Miss Morgan and Mr Fowle took a group of Post 16 students on an educational visit during February half term. The students found the trip very informative and had a wonderful time.

Here is a comment from Will Anderson and Suresh Singh who went on the trip "*Perhaps one of the best trips Downend School has ever organised, the visit to New York and Washington was a great educational experience. Everyone had an enjoyable time and no other school trip has compared to what we have taken away from this*"

Film Club

Mrs Hanks and Mr Smith continue to host the Film Club every Monday after school. Downend has once again been recognised as having an outstanding Film Club by being awarded Star Status. The award gives access to special events, free cinema tickets and guest speakers.

Attendance and holiday requests

We cannot stress enough to parents that the links between **attendance and achievement** are proven to be very strong, and we want our students to have the best possible chance to succeed. It is therefore vital that all our students **aim for 100% attendance** and punctuality throughout the year. We would ask you to continue to consider the implications for your child's education and progress when booking your holidays.

We will **not** be authorising holidays during term time for any students in years 9, 10 and 11. Students in Years 7 and 8 will not be authorised to take holidays during terms 1 and 5. Should you wish to request a holiday, it is essential that you contact Mrs Feltham, Assistant Headteacher in writing, at least 4 weeks before the holiday is due to take place. Should your child be absent from school for any reason please make sure you inform the school at your earliest convenience so that the absence can be coded appropriately. Once again thank you very much for your help and support in this matter.

Achievements/Events

Glyn Davies, an ex student had one of his films accepted by the British Film Industry for the Future Films Award for young film makers of the future. He went to London to the awards ceremony and his film won. There were over 300 entries and the British Film Industry only accept four nominations. Glyn was one of our first students to study Film Studies at A Level.

Ben Lovell, also an ex student was recently contacted by an outdoor pursuits company that have several bases throughout the UK and France. Ben was successful in his interview and has joined them for a twelve month period. During this training time Ben will have the opportunity to take 25 qualifications.

Maths Faculty – The maths faculty recently held a number day and raised £131.90 to go to NSPCC. They also present an outstanding effort cup to students each term.

Latin sessions- The first block of Latin lessons has been very successful and we will be continuing these during this term.

Lacrosse Club – This club has recently formed and is after school on a Wednesday. So far students from years 8-10 have been taking part and hope to play some matches against other schools in the summer.

Girls Tag Rugby Club - On Thursdays during this term fourteen students from Year 8 have been attending tag rugby. They have been entered into a South West competition on Wednesday 27 April.

Stages Dance Club – The Year 11 girls who took part in this event at The Colston Hall earlier this month put on an incredible performance. They were very professional and had a fantastic time.

Toby Hacker, Year 9 has just passed his Grade 5 Piano Exam, with the best results he has ever had in a piano exam.

Jack Keepin, Year 7 swims for Soundwell Swimming Club and competed in the Gloucester Blocks competition last month. Jack won a silver medal for the 200m breaststroke.

Important Diary Dates

Monday 4 April – PTA meeting LRC 6.30pm

Wednesday 6 April – Spring Concert

Thursday 7 April – **End of Term 4 for Students**

Friday 8 April - INSET day

Tuesday 26 April – Start of Term 5

Wednesday 27 April – Downend's Got Talent Semi Final (revised date) Tickets for students on sale in the finance office 50p each

Friday 29 April – Additional Bank Holiday

Monday 2 May – Bank Holiday

Monday 3 May – Departure of French Exchange Trip

Thursday 5 May – Year 7 Parent Consultation Evening

Monday 9 May – PTA meeting LRC 6.30pm

Saturday 14 May – PTA Spring Plant Sale 10.00-12.00

Friday 27 May – End of Term 5