



WISBECH
GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Headmaster's Trinity Half-Term Newsletter

26 May 2017

As half term is upon us, the Upper 6th are very much 'enjoying' their last official days at school before study leave and we are also experiencing some glorious summer weather. I do hope this is not going to be all that we see of summer this year. The first five weeks of term have gone in a flash and we are very much looking forward to the second half of the Trinity term and the holiday period where the School will be very busy with a number of new developments.

Over the holidays, our plan is to transform the existing netballs courts/playground area into two brand new, floodlit netball courts. This is an incredibly exciting venture and will see the area between the Old Dining Hall and Skelton Hall completely transformed. The new surface means that this area will no longer be available for car parking. To assist with the shortages we have in parking on-site and until we have full agreement on the planned movement of staff parking to the astro pitch, we will be creating additional parking spaces between Skelton Hall and the Maintenance Department.

Having mentioned the Old Dining Hall, the decision here has been to transform this one time assembly hall, gym and dining hall into a drama and dance studio. With the drive to give the Performing Arts that essential uplift and to ensure we are offering a breadth and depth to our educational offer that we have not had before, it is important to provide a space where pupils with talents in Dance and Musical Theatre can fully express themselves. We are working at present on a partnership with Studio19 in King's Lynn, to see if we can offer Dance as a new period 5 activity from September. In addition to how we are going to redevelop the Old Dining Hall, the corridor and spaces around it will also be renovated.

Lastly, with the inexorable move towards the front car park becoming available for visitors and parents in the years to come, the decision has been made to merge our Pupil Services provision to one location. At present, parents will know that there is a reception in both Magdalene House and on North Brink for the Senior School. From September, the Pupil Services facility will be located in the Crush Hall (of Magdalene House). In this work we will open up the existing reception space, improve the security in and out of Magdalene House, provide a dedicated medical room as well as provide a break out area for accelerated or supported learning and an additional meeting space. The Crush Hall will act as our central reception hub, be closer to the car park and ensure that there is a single point of focus for visitors, parents and guests alike.

I am really excited by this package of projects as there will be a significant impact on the School in its operation, its facilities and the offer we are able to make to the entire school community from 4-18 years.

After half term we will post some plans in the Skelton Hall (under the clock) of the summer developments should you wish to take a closer look.

From a staffing perspective, this is always the time when we say good bye to some staff and prepare to welcome new staff into the School or as they prepare to take on new roles. As you all know, Mike Forrest, our long serving Deputy Head Academic leaves WGS in July and will be replaced by Tansy Castledine from St George's College, Weybridge. We also say goodbye to Dr JoAnne Garner who is returning to Scotland and Kei Bergh who is departing to go back to his beloved South West. Kei is being replaced by Emma Simmonds who is coming to us from Marshland School, has previously been Director of Sport at Bedford Modern and is a top flight netballer.

Dr Stuart Miller is stepping down as Head of Biology and is taking on more whole school responsibilities under his Senior Tutor job role and Miss Debbie Cook will succeed him as Head of Department from September. In Magdalene House, Karen Fairbrother has been appointed Assistant Deputy Head and will be an excellent right hand and support for Keryn Neaves.

Claire Harding, our amazing SENCo is moving across to just cover Magdalene House and going part-time from the beginning of next year. We are fortunate to have appointed Dr Emma Stanley Isaac to oversee our Learning Support provision in the Senior School, as well as teaching some science lessons. In the Maths department we welcome Vincent Hart who will be starting his teaching career at WGS. He is a former pupil of the School, gained a 1st class honours degree from Nottingham University and has also played international rugby 7s for Belgium.

Steve Harris our Estates Bursar retires at the start of this half term and we have already welcomed Andrew Dighton (previously at Uppingham) into the Facilities department and one of his first jobs is to coordinate the summer developments programme - good luck, Andrew! Nothing like starting off with a bang! Lastly, but by no means least, Neil Taylor, our fantastic new Head of Cricket will be with us in a permanent capacity from now on and will assist in coaching hockey where he has extensive experience and in addition, help with our sporting outreach/ community programmes that we have ambitious plans for.

All that remains is for me to wish you all a good half term and we look forward to seeing everyone after the break.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Staley', with a horizontal line underneath it.

Chris Staley BA MBA
Headmaster