

Dear Parents,

1st April 2011

This term hardly a day has passed without St. Richard's enjoying academic achievements, sporting success, musical performances, lectures, a school play, riding events, and extra-curricular activities. I am proud of your children for all they have achieved and I thank the staff for their support in guiding the school through a very busy few months. We endeavour to keep you informed about these events on the website. Please remember to look at the Parent page, News page and new Music News page, all of which are regularly updated.

The second half of term began with our annual cross country days for both Primary and Prep Schools. As always, these were well attended, and the St Richard's teams competed in both these and other Cross Country challenges with success. I would like to mention Felicity Hayward, who came first over all other competing schools at Abberley Hall. Netball and Football have been played with skill and enthusiasm this term, and we have continued to hold matches with our neighbouring schools. The 1st Rugby 7s squad enjoyed their annual weekend at The Oratory, near Reading, competing with a large number of Catholic schools from around the country, and enabling them to experience varied levels of the game. Hockey continues to thrive; early next term the U11 girls head to the West of England Hockey Championships at Millfield for this notable tournament. This year we have a large number of riders, most of whom took part in this term's Dressage day in early March. Next term the riders take part in Dressage and Show Jumping events. We hope as many of you will attend these as possible.

Looking forward to Athletics next term, on Wednesday 25th May we are holding a Primary Schools Athletics Meeting, when we welcome some local schools for an afternoon of fun challenges. St. Richard's will also be represented at other county events, details of which are in the calendar and on the website.

Once again the children and staff rose to the occasion in their performance of 'City Kids' this week. We were fortunate that Tom Wells, who wrote the play and music, came to see the production on Tuesday night. I have had wonderful feedback from both Tom and those who attended. The storyline and the credible acting from the children who performed 'in the round' (the Assembly Hall was transformed into wartime England) were much enjoyed. My thanks to all those who contributed to its success, especially Alexis Cheesman, Amy Richardson and Hugh Farey.

We have also enjoyed a musical term, with Mrs Bull and the music department running a full programme. Early in March, violinist Diana Galvydyte, accompanied by Adrian Williams, joined us for a morning workshop of virtuoso violin pieces. She interspersed her presentation with stories of learning the violin in Lithuania and later at the Yehudi Menuhin School. The next day, some of our singers joined eminent choral composer and conductor Bob Chilcott for a 'Sing Up' day in Birmingham Town Hall. After rehearsing all day with other Midlands choir groups, there was a massed choir concert of Chilcott's music. St. Richard's children have also shone at the recent Hereford Festival (excellent results include Eugene Williams's distinction in the Recital class, where he competed with much older children) and my thanks to the parents who supported and helped during the Festival week. As well as all this, members of the choir have been rehearsing for a performance in Hereford Cathedral (with the choirs of Hereford Cathedral School) of Haydn's "Nelson" Mass. The intensive weekly rehearsals led to a most beautiful performance on Wednesday 30th March.

We have just heard that those who took practical music exams have passed, many with merits. We are awaiting the Theory results, these will be sent out once they have been received. Well done to all involved.

I am continuing to visit Senior Schools this year, which has proved most informative and useful for guiding and preparing our pupils as they move on to higher education. I am pleased to report that Tatiana Watt has achieved an Exhibition to St. Mary's School, Calne (Tatiana also won the Grade 4 piano class at the Hereford Festival), and Danielle Browne has achieved a place at Monmouth Girls' School. Early next term, children are sitting further entrance examinations.

We have appointed a new Matron, Mrs Gwenda Lee, who will be joining us in September 2011. As a former parent and part-time games teacher, she has had a long association with St. Richard's, and looks forward to meeting you next term, when she will be in from time to time as she shadows Stevie.

On this note, Mr Andrew Rambridge is retiring from St. Richard's at the end of the Summer Term. He has guided many children towards achievements in Classics at their secondary schools and then at university. He has been here for over ten years and will be much missed.

The time of year has again arrived when the Governors decide on the level of fees for the following academic year. This year we face significant food and fuel inflation and for this reason the Governors have decided that from September 2011 the fees will rise by 4.5% in both the Pre-Prep and Prep school. The extras will also rise by 4.5%, with the exception of minibus charges which will rise by 10%.

In addition the Governors also request that, in accordance with the school's contract with parents, fees are paid on or before the first day of term. From September 2011, in the rare cases where fees are more than a month late, the school will reserve the right to impose a late payment fee of £150, and an interest charge of 1% per month. These charges will be applied at the discretion of the Headmaster. This arrangement brings the school in line with the terms and conditions of most independent schools.

Thank you to everyone who bought in 'blue bags' and once again supported this excellent fundraiser co-ordinated by Jane Lewis. We collected 677 kg in weight which translates to a massive £338.50. The CAFOD and Comic Relief day have together raised nearly £400 which will be sent to the respective charities. Many thanks to everyone involved.

I would like to draw your attention to Parents' Weekend on 18th and 19th June. There is a full programme on the Saturday, beginning with an invitation to bring along a picnic lunch to enjoy in the School grounds. This will be followed by the musical play "Honk" given by Forms 1 and 2, then tea in the Rose Garden and the Mothers/Leavers Rounders game. From 6.00pm onwards, we are holding a family Barn dance with live music, food and good company! On Sunday morning there is Dressage in the Arena, followed by a barbecue by the pool with swimming and tennis. After lunch the much anticipated Fathers vs Leavers Cricket match will be held on the cricket pitch, with Show Jumping in the park. More details will be out at the start of next term but do not forget to put a note in your diary, and invite friends and family along.

We will also be celebrating First Holy Communion on Saturday 25th June. Please do let Dicky know, as soon as possible, if you haven't already, if you would like your child to be prepared for this Sacrament.

As always I hope you all enjoy a very peaceful and happy Easter and I look forward to seeing the children on Tuesday 26th April at the start of the Summer Term, clad in Summer uniform. Please do note that Wednesday 27th April will be a full academic teaching day until 5:15pm with no matches. We will take off again for our long weekend on Thursday 28th April at 6:00pm.

Yours sincerely,

Nathan S Cheesman
Encs
Provisional Calendar
Term Bill
Health Certificate
Minibus Forms