

July 2010

Dear Parents,

As I explained in my speech at Gaudy, this year we looked closely at how to raise the academic aspiration and performance of our pupils. This process included consultation with Governors, teachers and pupils, and also involved visits to other schools where we identified areas of best practice. At the end of this process we have come to a number of action points for next year and I wanted to write you to highlight changes that your child should expect in September. The Director of Studies already outlined these points to pupils in greater detail in the final assembly of the year.

1. We will protect lesson time. Lesson time is the most valuable part of the day for your son or daughter, and this is the centre of teaching and learning in the school. We are working hard to eliminate various disruptions from lessons. Parents can help us by respecting term dates and avoiding making plans that might require their son or daughter to miss school.
2. We will protect prep time. Too often in the past we have had societies or activities that have cut into prep time, leaving pupils with too little time to complete their work. We will now run prep at school from 7 – 9 pm. The first hour of prep has a bit more flexibility: there will be music rehearsals at this time and departmental societies. However, after 8 pm all pupils must be in house for prep. I have attached the new daily routine document. This new schedule of the day also means that pupils will have proper breaks at lunch and supper, with fewer activities or disruptions.
3. We will raise the aspirations of our pupils through reward and encouragement. The School already has an impressively wide range of awards, both for achievement and effort. We are set to expand the culture of praise in departments and in houses, and I hope pupils and parents will notice this next year.

4. Just as we are asking more of our pupils, we are asking more of our teachers. We are already an ISC regional centre for new teachers, and Ofsted deemed another three of our teachers to be 'Outstanding' this year in their Graduate Teacher Programmes. Next year we will expand our own Professional Development Review with an emphasis on lesson observation and sharing of good practice.

5. We have asked Housemasters and Housemistresses to make their Houses centres of ambition and achievement. HMs have enthusiastically responded and it was their model of a longer prep with more supervision that we will take forward next year. We will have more teachers on duty during prep time, and encourage pupils to work in supervised classrooms during prep time if they find this a more productive environment.

We do many things well at St Edward's but with the five key points above we hope that next year we can promote the academic aspirations of our pupils, and inspire them to achieve.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,