



Caistor Grammar School

A Selective Academy
Church Street Caistor
Lincolnshire LN7 6QJ
Tel. 01472 851250 Fax. 01472 852248
Roger Hale M.A., M.A.(Ed.) Headmaster

18 November 2014

Parents' Letter 15/2014

Dear Parents

KEY POINTS IN THIS LETTER
The "Tell us what you think" letter
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A fabulous Fancy Dress "Children in Need" day• A day to remember at the Palace• Winning the International Schools' Award for the third time• The Annual Parents' Questionnaire: Tell us what you think• Just how good are your children?• Pupil Premium Eligibility• School Uniform• Request for Work Experience placements• Sixth Form Open Evening
Enclosures
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parents' Questionnaire 2014
A warm invitation to all parents, relatives and friends of the school to attend the public performance of the House Music competition at 7pm on this coming Wednesday, 19th November. Entry is free.

A fabulous Fancy Dress "Children in Need" day

We all enjoyed a really memorable day at School last Friday supporting "Children in Need" and raising for this great cause (£760 plus at the last count), in considerable style. Words can't really do justice to the zaniness, wit, invention and enthusiasm of our staff and students, so I do urge you to go to the School website and check out the pictures there. You might also look at my Twitter feed – easily accessible by clicking on the little bird in the top right hand corner of our webpage, even if you don't have a Twitter account yourself. This truly was CGS as we want it to be: a fantastic atmosphere, warmth, good humour and a genuine enjoyment at sharing our lives together.

A day to remember at the Palace

I had the great honour to attend one of the Gold Award ceremonies which the Duke of Edinburgh hosts at St James' Palace in London just before half term. It was a very special event for our School since no fewer than 10 CGS students were receiving their Gold Award on this day. I was accompanied by Mrs Jo Hoare, who co-ordinates all Duke of Edinburgh Award activity at our School and does a really tremendous job. We were in the Queen Anne room and were hosted by Vivienne Westwood, the fashion designer (whom I had the pleasure of sitting next to and talking to) and Phil Brown, the ex-Olympic athlete who is the DofE Co-ordinator for the East Midlands. The Duke of Edinburgh himself has attended over 500 Award ceremonies and remains indefatigable and impressive in his ongoing enthusiasm for his own test of skills for young people. At CGS, we have 44 students doing Bronze, 31 students doing Silver and 28 students doing Gold currently: it is a remarkable achievement for a School of 660 or so students. This is only possible because of the talents, commitment and resourcefulness of a very large number of my colleagues, both non-teaching and teaching. I pay tribute to all of them and I am extremely grateful for all that they do.

Winning the International Schools' Award for the third time

I am delighted to announce that we have been awarded the International Schools' Award for the third time as a result of our continued wide range of activities and visits. Our application process and much of our international work is co-ordinated by Dr Dan Wilton and I am especially grateful to him for his enthusiasm and dedication. A very good example of this excellent work in action was our recent trip to China. This year's cohort of International Ambassadors had a brilliant experience, made many friends and sampled a culture and lifestyle very different from their own. Thanks go to Mr Michael Robinson, who led our party. We are also very grateful to staff and students from Lincoln Christ's Hospital School and their International Co-ordinator, Mr Chris Williams, who are our partner school in this enterprise. Our International Ambassadors this year are as follows: Shelley Barker (12RDH), Isabella Chase (12GJ), Benjamin Cook (12AJH), Matthew Crown (12DS), Charlie Graves (12DS), Joseph Hewitt, Rhianna Janes (12RDH), Rebecca Jex (12GJ), Hayley Potterton (12AJH), Sophie Siemaszkiewicz (12AH), Rosie Tate (12AJH), William Walker (12RDH) and Harry Williams (12DS).

The Annual Parents' Questionnaire: Tell us what you think

It is that time of year again when we ask parents to fill in our Annual Parents' Questionnaire. (We are sending you two copies home with this letter.) We really appreciate you taking the time and making an effort to complete this form and to return it to us. All schools are exceptionally accountable to a whole range of constituencies, not least, their parental body and it is vital for us that you tell us what you think. If you are happy, believe your child is exceptionally fortunate to attend this school and daily count your blessings that they are here, then please emphatically tell us this! Similarly, this is an ideal opportunity to express any concerns or doubts or disappointments you have with us. (Though, of course, I would not want you to wait for a whole year to do that – simply pick up the phone or send us an email.) Our questionnaire form is also available as a separate attachment on line just in case you are reading this not having had the actual Parents' letter delivered to you. You should know that concurrently, our staff have completed their questionnaire and we are asking students for their views too. Last year all three sets of results were extremely positive and we hope that the same will be true this year. If so, it will be a very important validation of all our work and effort.

Just how good are your children?

Just how good are your children? My answer to that is “extremely”. Just because your child is a student at Caistor Grammar School does not mean that they are guaranteed success nor does it promise that they are diligent in making the most of their potential. However, we have arrived at a “tipping point” time where the overwhelming majority of students at this School are achieving extremely highly and, moreover, are attempting to be as good as they can be. The growing number of students gaining “All 1s” in their Assessments is a powerful testament to this. Recently no fewer than 20 students in one form, 8Y, managed this but last year two forms have managed 19. Another powerful piece of evidence is the increasing number of students gaining A*s. In the recent Year 9 assessments, 23 students in 9X, 23 students in 9Y and 25 in 9Z gained at least 1 A* but many students are gaining far more than that – which is impressive indeed. We do not want CGS students to be arrogant or boastful but we do want them to realise their own worth and we also want them to see that they really are as good as anyone in the country and really can achieve the highest standards in their exams and in terms of gaining the most prestigious university places and then the most sought after jobs. Self-confidence is a crucial ingredient in life-long success: as Dr Carr used to say, “If you believe you can or you believe you can't, you are probably right”. So when you are talking to your children about their potential, please do bear all the above in mind and be very proud!

Pupil Premium Eligibility

Pupil Premium is a funding stream awarded to the School to help provide extra opportunities for students who have ever been 'looked after' or in care for one day or more; the children of service personnel and families who are eligible for Free School Meals or who have been within the last six years.

From April 2014, schools receive funding for students who have been registered on the school census as having been adopted from care or leaving care under a special guardianship or residence order. If you believe that you or your children meet any of this criteria, please can you inform the School as soon as possible.

Parents can apply for free school meals even if they don't want to take up free school meals, as this funding can assist your child in many other ways, from extra tuition to assistance with school trips. So that the School can benefit from this extra funding, please contact the Finance Manager, Mrs Claire Mosey, if you need help applying or if you need more information.

School Uniform

We would like to thank parents once more for your support with school uniform this term. Now that the weather is colder, students can wear hats, scarves and gloves at school when wearing an outdoor coat over their blazer, but they should not be worn inside school. In addition, boots are not part of School uniform. They may be worn to and from school but school shoes should be worn around the School site during the school day.

Request for help in finding Work Experience placements

Our Year 10 students are starting to look for work experience placements. All 94 of them will be going out on work experience from July 13th – 17th 2015 and it is sometimes difficult for them to find suitable placements. If any parents (or friends of the school) can offer placements in their workplaces to one or two of our pupils at this time, we would be delighted to hear from them. There is a requirement that placement providers need to have Employers and Public Liability Insurance and a Health and Safety Policy; this normally rules out enterprises of fewer than five employees. If you think you might be able to offer a placement, or would like further details, please contact Miss R Turner, Head of Careers, at the school on email Rebecca.turner@caistorgrammar.com or telephone 01472 851250. We are always very grateful for the support which parents provide at this time.

Sixth Form Open Evening

We are holding our annual Sixth Form Open Evening for entry into our Lower Sixth in September 2015. We very much hope that every student in our current Year 11 will attend with their parents, but we also have a number of places for external students (there are 20 students who are currently in our Lower Sixth who took their GCSE exams in other schools). If you know of anyone who might be interested, please do encourage them to come along. The evening will start at 7pm prompt and will begin in our school gym on Tuesday 25th November 2014.

With very best wishes

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Roger Hale". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'R'.

Headmaster