



Serva Fidem

Headmaster: Mr. Duncan Murphy BA (Hons), MEd, FRSA
Member of IAPS & Society of Heads

Wednesday 8th September 2021

Dear Parents

I trust you enjoyed a relaxing and enjoyable summer holiday, notwithstanding the travel restrictions in place - welcome to the start of the autumn term at Kingswood House.

In this letter, I will concentrate on day-to-day, non-Covid related details - but it is obviously essential that you read with great care the information that was sent out in August and ensure that your child is well-prepared for a return to the school on Thursday. If you have any queries at all, please contact your form teacher in the first instance.

Co-Education

I speak for all the staff when I say we are very excited to officially open our doors to girls as well as boys for the first time in 122 years! It is gratifying to note that we start with over 250 pupils on roll, with 66 new joiners, including 19 girls. All the new starters are in school at the time of writing for their induction day in advance of the start of term and it is wonderful to see so many smiling faces. Importantly, we had an ISI material change inspection on Tuesday which successfully validated the school's move to co-education and yielded some very supportive comments from the reporting inspector in relation to the details of our preparation. A new era begins tomorrow but please rest assured that we shall continue to keep listening and learning together on this journey to ensure that every child feels happy, secure and safe.

GCSE

It is with great pride that I congratulate our third cohort of Year 11 leavers who secured a brilliant set of GCSE results with 100% of grades 9-4 (A**- C) and 66% of grades 9-6 (A**- B). Importantly, and in keeping with our reputation as a holistic school, we have delivered excellent after-care during the holiday and all students have moved on to sixth forms of choice for the next phase of their educational career. The boys truly personified our KHS values during a most exacting year and it was rewarding to see them achieve their full potential when it mattered most.

FINALIST - Independent School of the Year Award 2021

I am delighted to share the news with you that following our shortlist nomination in June, Kingswood House has now reached the final of this very prestigious awards ceremony. For a school of our size, this is a remarkable achievement and I once again pay tribute to my fantastic team. Fingers crossed!



Summer Works

A lot of enhancements have been conducted across the West Hill site over recent weeks in preparation for the return to school for children and staff alike. I should like to thank Sally Witts, as well as Paul and Ron from the estates team, for their time and effort in this respect. Amongst many other things, the most visible development is the astroturf which is in the process of being comprehensively refurbished – it should be completed within days; the new girls' changing room looks absolutely fantastic as does the newly-designed Reception classroom in Lower Prep; additionally, the entrance hall and stairwell of the Main House have been redecorated as has the Dining Room.

The Kingswood House Way

It is my expectation that the boys and girls revisit the importance of listening carefully, trying their hardest in all aspects of school life and treating others as they would wish to be treated. In addition to the Kingswood House Way, I believe that these values are the platform for a convivial, purposeful and supportive environment where each child can achieve their potential and grow in self-esteem. I should be grateful if you were to reinforce these precepts at home in order for there to be a consistency of approach, which will be a significant benefit to us all, not least the pupils. The core value of the Kingswood House Way for this term is *RESPECT* and it will be explored and reinforced during Form Time, PSHE and Assemblies by the Divisional Heads and myself. Subject Enrichment will be English in the first half of term followed by mathematics in the second half of term, the exciting details of which will be circulated shortly.

Future Schools

I continue to network with a wide range of prestigious senior schools as well as independent and maintained sixth form colleges; you can be assured that our teachers will ensure that pupils are well-prepared to meet the demands of admissions, as appropriate. With the highly successful evolution of our own Senior Years, as evidenced by our outstanding GCSE results, you are able to consider the next step carefully – secure in the knowledge that we offer an excellent pathway through to GCSE and beyond.

I am always prepared to meet with KHS families to listen, give advice and act accordingly in their child's best interests. As such, I invite parents in Year 7 and Year 8 who are yet to commit to our Senior Years to make an appointment to meet with me this term or next. If you have already paid your child's deposit for the Senior Years (Year 9 upwards) and are committed to him or her staying at KHS then this is not necessary but if you have yet to make up your mind, please note that there is considerable pressure on numbers in September 2022 and even 2023 – places are not retained automatically. Please speak with Zoe Ashton, Head of Admissions, if you are unsure about any aspect of this process.

Pupil Appointments

I extend a warm welcome to the record number of new pupils who are starting at Kingswood House; I feel very sure, given the friendly nature of the school, that they will all settle in quickly.

Additionally, I should like to congratulate Theo Spick (Senior Head Boy), Eddie Fisher (Senior Deputy Head Boy), Angelo Cooper, Joseph Offen, Jestico Seemampillai and Ewan Walker (Senior Prefects), Noah Seager (Upper Prep Head Boy), Theo Jenkins (Upper Prep Deputy Head Boy) as well as Dylan Bishop, Samuel Carroll, Avaneesh Gunjal, Krishan Idrees, Theo Moffatt and Elliot Nicolaou (Upper Prep Prefects) upon their appointments. Well done also to Ciaran Pantlin who is this term's Lower Prep monitor.

They will, I am certain, be fine ambassadors for Kingswood House. There will be plenty of other positions of responsibility in due course for other boys and girls to aspire to and I trust that they will put themselves forward for consideration accordingly.

Staff News

Yesterday was the first school INSET day at Kingswood House for a number of new staff and I am delighted with the depth and strength of our talented team: Ella Bray (English, Independent Learning & Life Skills Co-ordinator, 9B Form Teacher), Laura de Klerk (Reception Teacher, Clubs Co-ordinator), Zoe Ashton (Head of Admissions) and Emily Burdon (Science Technician - maternity cover).

I offer our congratulations to Ella Bray who married over the summer - and also to Nikita Patel who announced her engagement!

Some existing staff now have a slightly different or enhanced role: Amanda Earl (Head of Marketing), Ines Witts (Admissions & Office Administrator), Julie Smith (Functional Skills Teacher), Sandra O'Shea (Independent Learning Supervisor) and Chantel Martins (Graduate Assistant).

In the Study Centre, we also welcome: Calum Barnes (LSA), Sophie Roberts (LSA), Claire Mills (LSA), Amanda Reed (LSA) and Ashna Ganatra (Speech & Language).

I am sure you will join me in wishing our new teaching and support staff a long and successful association with Kingswood House.

Communication

I am grateful to Ian Mitchell for his work on the timetable over the summer. It is once again our busiest, and most fruitful, on record with bountiful opportunities for wonderful teaching and learning!

In terms of channels of communication, please kindly note the following: Mr Ian Mitchell, as Deputy Head, has whole school responsibility for all operational matters and will be in charge on a day to day basis as and when I am away on school business. Likewise, Mr James March, as Director of Studies, has whole school responsibility for all aspects of academic management and pupils' progress. The Divisional Heads are Mrs Nicki Lambert (Lower Prep Rec-Y4), Mr Liam Clarke (Upper Prep Y5-8) and Mr Sachin Sukhdeo (Seniors Y9-11). Please note that your first port of call should very much remain your child's form teacher on a day to day basis but you are invited to raise any query with the appropriate Divisional Head, as needed.

All teaching staff are contactable via their school email addresses but please note that we believe pastoral matters are better addressed in a meeting rather than in writing; the following standards are a basic premise:

- i. Email contact with staff should be on a 'needs must' professional basis and is expected to be polite and respectful in tone at all times in keeping with our values.
- ii. Teachers spend most of their time in direct contact with the boys and girls – as such, please do not expect an immediate reply - but staff have been asked to check emails daily and you can anticipate a timely response.
- iii. Urgent emails should always be sent to the school office with the form teacher copied in.
- iv. In the event of a query, email should be used as a precursor to a telephone conversation or a meeting – not as a replacement.

There will always be plenty of informal opportunities to speak with staff throughout the term, online or in person (at last!), and a proud 'open door' culture exists at Kingswood House. Consequently, you are welcome to meet with any member of staff at mutual convenience to discuss your son or daughter throughout the year - it is not necessary to wait for a parents' evening.

Drop off, Pick up & Parking

Please request a KHS car sticker from the front office if you do not have one already. These should be displayed clearly in your windscreen to assist with safety at pick up times. If you would prefer your child to bring one home, please liaise with their form teacher. At the start of term especially, there will be some pressure on parking in and around the school. Do use the drop-off points responsibly and with consideration for other drivers as well as our neighbours.

A member of staff will now be on duty in the playground at the earlier time of 8.00am. A reminder, please, that your child should arrive for the start of the school day in good time for registration - but no boy or girl should be in school before this time unless they are booked in to Breakfast Club, which commences at 7.30am. A reminder that these places are limited and must be secured in advance via the school office – the same applies to After School Club, which runs until 6.00pm.

Any pupil coming in to school significantly after 8.45am will be marked as 'late' on the register. The provision of effective registration is a statutory requirement and I would appreciate your support in making it as easy and accurate a procedure for us to apply as possible.

Equally, the light is already fading in the evenings and it will not be long before autumn draws in and summer becomes a distant memory. For the safety of the pupils, please ensure you arrive promptly at the end of the school day and that you are visible to the member of staff on duty at pick up. This is especially important after the clocks change because it will be dark at the end of the school day.

Calendar Events

It is my strong recommendation that all parents attend the Divisional Information Meetings at the start of the academic year, which will be held both in person at school and streamed via MS Teams. It is a great opportunity to hear from key staff, glean useful information and ask any questions you may have. Invitations and access details will be sent out by the Divisional Heads for you to join the meeting remotely. Please note that priority will be given to new families to attend in person.

Seniors (Y9-11):	Thursday 9 th September
Upper Prep (Y5-8):	Monday 13 th September
Lower Prep (Y1-Y4):	Wednesday 15 th September

We are currently planning for a more 'normal' style of Harvest Festival, Remembrance and Christmas celebrations. Any changes to these, or other calendar events, will be posted on the website, sent by parentmail or detailed in the weekly newsletter; you can also receive regular updates throughout the term on Twitter by following @KingswoodHouse and @KHSPrep as well as on Instagram by tuning in to @kingswood_house.

Open Morning

Our first Open Morning will take place on Saturday 18th September. This is already fully-booked with 48 families visiting the school by appointment at 15 minute intervals in small groups. Senior and Upper Prep Prefects will be required to assist with tours on this day and should confirm attendance with their Divisional Head and report to them at 8.45am in uniform on the day, please.

The Kingswood House Association

The Kingswood House Association (KHA) is a source of valuable information and I know that any parents who are keen to get involved would be most welcome; if you would like to assist, please let Lisa Reece (Chair) or Sally Witts (Bursar) know and attend the AGM on the evening of Monday 20th September. We are looking forward to hosting social events for our families after what seems a very long time!

Finally, I am looking forward to seeing the school back in full flow this term – I have long since given up trying to second-guess what will happen in the weeks or months ahead but you can rest assured that we are well-equipped to navigate any choppy waters as and when they arise. As ever, our key words will be kindness and patience as we seek to help the boys and girls settle back in to life at school after a long holiday. Your ongoing support and understanding will be invaluable as we embark on an historic year for Kingswood House.

Yours sincerely



Duncan A I Murphy
Headmaster