



Serva Fidem

Headmaster: Matthew Bryan
MA (Cantab.), MA (Oxon.), MSc, PGCE, FRSA

19 April 2024

Dear Parents

It's a very great pleasure to be writing to you as Headmaster. It's day two at Kingswood House for me and I've been so struck at how welcoming staff and pupils have been, endlessly helping me to understand how everything works! My newness notwithstanding, term is into full swing already, with javelins being thrown on the field, Year 10 exams underway tomorrow and 4S currently holding top spot because they fed me a delicious chapati with banana and icing sugar which they had made to begin their topic study of India.

I want to thank you all sincerely for your time and invaluable comments via our feedback survey last term. On Monday, Governors and SLT went through a full debrief on this, leading to a hugely useful conversation about next steps for the school. I was delighted to see so many positive themes coming through the feedback, reinforcing the sense I have always had that KHS is a unique school with a well-deserved reputation for outstanding pastoral care. Even more, it is a school which inspires real affection in its whole community, and a school which parents want to see thrive.

Having confirmation of what we do well is always useful, but my interest is always primarily (you're welcome to judge me as being a bit 'glass half empty' at this point!) in what we can do better. Among many suggestions and critiques concerning various parts of the school (including sport, food, and clubs to mention a few, which we will begin to address over the coming months) two predominant themes stood out which I want to address straight away.

Firstly, there was a theme surrounding behaviour. Let me be perfectly clear: I believe in children having the chance to make mistakes, and to learn from them. School has a fundamental part to play in terms of role-modelling and guiding our children and young people so that they can develop the decency, humanity, empathy and trustworthiness which are so vital (and yet so hard to measure in league tables). However, and it is a big however: school must be a safe environment for all who are here. I value kindness, caring and generosity above all. KHS will continue to do all it possibly can for each and every pupil in our care, but there is a clear and consistent set of expectations here – and there will be equally clear consequences for any who either cannot or will not share in our values.

I might put the second theme under the banner of 'communication'. Specifically, the message was loud and clear regarding a desire to go back to face-to-face conversations and clarity of information between parents and teachers. For what it's worth, I fully endorse this. The remote and technological world has given us excellent opportunities to stay in touch when we are overseas, or stuck at work. However, nothing will ever be as good as an in-person meeting. With a slightly different emphasis, several parents were looking for more transparency as regards data tracking and benchmarking, be that on an individual pupil level, or more 'macro' across whole year group / school outcomes. Again, as someone who loves playing with data graphs and spreadsheets, this was music to my ears! My initial analysis through this academic year has shown that the school is actually rather shy and retiring when it comes to trumpeting



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the remarkable 'value added' academic data which it can boast. You can expect to see much more of this in the near future.

Lastly on communication, it is clear that we haven't hitherto had the balance right in terms of frequency, length and precision of parent mailings. You will see a much condensed newsletter on Friday and – I hope – a more manageable level of traffic coming thereafter, with key information much easier to identify. On this note, I want to pay thanks to the wonderful class reps who I know do such a great job of ensuring that everyone knows what they need to.

To save those reps one job, can I sign off please by reminding everyone that we're looking forward to our whole school photograph tomorrow. Please can all pupils come to school in full school uniform. The forecast is that we should hope to remain dry until lunchtime, so please cross your fingers for us!

Wishing you all a happy, healthy and successful summer term to come, and looking forward to meeting you soon.

Yours sincerely,

Matthew Bryan

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