Dear Parent/Carer

Welcome to my final newsletter of the academic year. First of all, a quick reminder that school finishes at 12.30pm tomorrow.

We have had a very busy term and a few words of thanks are in order from me for the tremendous efforts of the students, staff and parents this term. I cannot name every contribution but some of the highlights include:

- Mr Elad for organising the Berlin trip at half term.
- Dr Buswell for organising the Year 8 Maritime Project and so many parents for coming to see the final presentations on the Friday – I know this meant a lot to the students.
- Mr Fielding and Miss Tanti for supporting Year 11 to complete their ECDL – 120 students passed the qualification with 85% of students achieving the equivalent of an A*/A grade.
- Mr Brown and Mr Anderson for organising the Year 12 Futures Days and the large group of former students who came back into school to share their experiences with our current students.
- Mrs Diaz and Miss Tanti for organising the Year 10 study skills day and some Year 11s who came back into school to pass on their experiences and advice to Year 10.
- Mr R Gardner for organising our first Founder’s Day. The students did a marvellous job with their stalls and the Holcombe Association did sterling work sweating over a hot BBQ! It was also lovely to see so many parents and Old Boys attending the day.
- Mr Brown for organising the International Day
- Mr Nanson for organising the Inter-House athletics – during which 2 records were broken: Dami Ogukeye in the High Jump and Adam Klucznik in the Shot Putt.
- Parents and students for hosting our Japanese guests from Kobe High School.
- Mr Patt and Dr North for providing the students with the opportunity to complete the Bronze Duke of Edinburgh expedition – we have over 40 Bronze Award students this year.

Building work this summer

As discussed at the Parent Council at the end of last month there will be significant building work taking place here at CGSB over the summer holidays. Works include:

- Improved security of the school site by introducing electronic pedestrian and vehicle gates at the front of the school
- Improved Sixth Form facilities with the conversion of M20 to a full time Sixth Form Centre including a cafe area which next year’s Year 12 and 13 have contributed to the design of
- Increased capacity of the Hall by knocking an archway into the side wall of the hall into the room behind, thereby increasing seating capacity by over 50%
- Creating a dedicated fiction library by combining the current SEN Room and knocking through into H12 to create a large dedicated space
- Creating better SEN provision and a quiet study area by converting the current Library into the school’s SEN Centre and supervised quiet study area
- We now have the lease for the old BORA Gym and associated facilities in that block. This block will now become the Performing Arts and PE Block at CGSB; from September students will have
access to: much improved changing facilities; a dedicated PE teaching room; a Drama studio for all Drama lessons and new Music rooms

- Please note that we will be applying for funding for the Gym roof in January 2015 and should know if this bid has been successful by March 2015
- We will be creating a dedicated Prefect Common Room in S19
- We will be improving the driveway by putting in a kerb and moving staff parking to the New Horizons part of the site; in addition the broken cricket nets will be removed and seeded to become additional PE and play space for the school
- We are also refurbishing the A Block toilets; however, these will be completed in Term 1
- There will also be a number of office moves over the summer:
  - My PA, Mrs Tanner, and I will be moving upstairs in the Holcombe House; this will allow my current office to be converted into a conference room and parent/teacher meeting room for use by the whole school.
  - Mr Hayes and Mr Kitchener will have Heads of House offices in the top of the Holcombe block so that they are near their House form rooms.
  - Miss Tanti will have an office in the S Block so that she can work closely with Year 11 students.
  - Mrs Kemp will have her Heads of House office in the C Block where her form room is also based.

**Homework monitoring:**
As you know, this term we have been much firmer about students handing in their homework and this has been very successful in identifying students who require additional support in their organisation or work habits to successfully complete and hand in the work expected of them here at CGSB

In September we will be modifying this approach so that students in Years 7, 8 and 9 will be given a day's grace to complete and hand in their homework – if they do not hand their homework in within 24 hours they will be placed in detention. For years 10 and 11 the current system of automatic detention the next day for failure to hand in homework will continue as it is essential that students in these year groups keep up to date with their work.

Sixth form students are of course expected to hand in work on time. Where students fail to complete work on time and miss extended deadlines then we will have to use detentions to ensure work is completed. However, persistent failure to do homework in the sixth form would act as a trigger for discussion regarding a student's ability and commitment to studying an academic course in the sixth form.

**Logo and school mission:**
Students and parents who attended the Parent Council have seen the new school logo and strapline – please see new logo at the end of this letter. The consensus of feedback has been that the use of the Holcombe House as the design of the logo is entirely in keeping with the traditions and values here at CGSB. New Year 7 students will be supplied with ties which will be replaced free of charge when stocks of the new design arrive in school. All other students will continue to wear their current ties until they need replacing at which point they will be able to purchase a new design tie. Unfortunately, we are still waiting for the logo for students blazers to be ready for production but we anticipate students receiving a replacement badge towards the end of the Christmas term. From September 2015 School Time will be supplying blazers with the new logo.
Year 11 into 12:
This is a reminder that students should come into school on Thursday 21st August to collect their GCSE results. The entry requirements to join CGSB sixth form is to have at least 3 B’s in subjects relevant to the A Level subjects being studied as well as a minimum of 5 C’s overall including English and Maths. Any student who does not reach this threshold should ensure they speak to a member of the senior leadership team on results day to discuss their options for September.

Year 12 into 13:
This is a reminder that Year 12 should come into school on Thursday 14th August to collect their AS results. Students must achieve 3 D’s in their AS levels to continue into Year 13. Any student who does not reach this threshold should ensure they speak to a member of the senior leadership team on results day to discuss their options for September.

Change to the school day:
Following our consultation with parents we have decided to alter the school day from September 2014; the school day will begin at 8.40am and end at 3.05pm. We are in continued discussion with bus companies regarding bus times for students at the end of the school day and I would remind parents that if there is a significant period of time between the end of the school day and a student’s bus time then they can use this time effectively by attending the Exceed Homework Support sessions that will be running after school on Monday to Thursday for all students.

Show My Homework:
Following the successful launch of Show My Homework the school will not be issuing homework diaries in September as all homework is accessible on line. If a student does not have internet access at home then parents should contact the school and a homework diary will be made available.

The school is looking to provide contact books for students. However, we are mindful that most contact is now by email or telephone rather than through homework diaries and so this situation will be reviewed.

Assessment Books:
The introduction of the marking stamp has been successful this year in improving the level of feedback that students have been receiving on their work. However, it is clear from Assessment reviews that work that students have done can become lost on pieces of paper or not consistently assessed by teachers. Therefore, from September we will be introducing Assessment books for students in all appropriate subjects. Any piece of work that a teacher will be formally assessing will be completed in this book. This will allow students to easily refer to their feedback on previous work as well as providing a central point for all assessed work to be completed and stored in. These Assessment books will form the basis of future Assessment reviews.
Year 10 into 11:
Students have examinations in the first few weeks back after the summer holidays. The examination papers have been set on Moodle or on Show My Homework for students – so students know exactly what they need to be revising in order to be successful in these examinations. These examinations are extremely important as they will be analysed to assess any adjustments that are necessary for individual student’s curriculum.

Staffing:
I know that many parents have been concerned about the turnover of staff that we have had here at CGSB during the course of the academic year. This has been the inevitable consequence of being placed in Special Measures and the subsequent focus on raising the quality of teaching and learning in the school. However, I am pleased to report that we have been able to bring in the vast majority of new staff before the end of the academic year in order to give new teachers the best possible start in September and I have already received very positive feedback from students and parents regarding some of these new members of staff. New staff that have started this term include:

- Miss Martin in Geography
- Mr Hayes, Associate Leader for Teaching and Learning, Head of History and Head of Shannon House
- Mr Kitchener, Associate Leader for school data, Maths teacher and Head of Conquest House
- Mr Nield in Maths
- Mr Butt in Maths
- Mr Lillicrap, Associate Leader for Teaching and Learning and Head of Chemistry
- Miss Wilson, Head of Science
- Miss MacNeil in English
- Mr McElroy in English
- Mr Foley, Assistant Principal responsible for Teaching and Learning.

From September the only new members of staff joining us will be Miss King as Lead Practitioner for Teaching and Learning in English and Mrs Welch who will be providing subject teaching in ICT, where we are looking to make a permanent appointment for January 2015

Support staff:
As part of the Governors review of the school budget we have had to undertake a restructuring of the support staff within the school as the structure that was in place in September 2013 was not sustainable. The new Administration/student learning and pastoral support structure is as follows:

- Principal’s PA and HR Officer: Mrs Tanner
- Business manager: Mr Kotsis
- Examinations/Office Manager: Mr Akin
- Reception: Mrs McShea
- Reprographics: Mrs Hilton
- SIMS Manager: Ms Wadely
- SENCO and Pupil Premium Support Manager: Ms Currie
- Learning Support Assistant: Mrs Childs
- Cover Support and Learning Assistant: Mr Head
- Cover Supervisor and Administration: Ms Berry
Pastoral Support and Attendance KS3: Mrs Welch
Pastoral Support and Attendance KS5: Mrs Taylor

Holcombe Heroes:
As parents know we have run a number of Saturday’s when members of the school community have come in to support the school with a number of site projects including, clearing, decorating and installing new doors. This work has been invaluable in the contribution it has made to the Teaching and Learning environment. We will be running our first Holcombe Heroes day on Saturday 27th September, if you are able to support the school for a few hours in the morning or afternoon then this will be gratefully received. We will be focusing on the new Drama Studio.

Uniform:
It has been noticeable in the final weeks of the school term that student uniform – particularly their shoes has declined. Whilst I understand that some parents may not wish to buy shoes for their son just before the summer break it is essential that every student is correctly attired in September ready for the new academic year.

Parking:
Following a meeting with local residents could I please ask that parents respect the parking restrictions in the local area as this can cause difficulties with some residents.

I would like to thank everyone for their hard work and dedication this academic year and hope your all enjoy a restful and enjoyable summer holiday. I look forward to seeing you on Tuesday 2nd September ready for a new academic year.

Yours sincerely

S. Gardner
Principal