

September 2010

To Parents of Boys in **Year 7**

Dear Parents,

Welcome to Merchant Taylors' Senior School. I am sure that your son had been looking forward to joining us and we hope that his first two weeks have gone well. We will do all that we can to ensure a positive start to the academic year. In addition I would like to mention the following points:

1. Our results both at GCSE and A Level were again very good this year and they are founded on the work done in the Lower School. In this connection it is most important for all boys to develop a regular habit of study at home, at an early stage in their school career. In the first three years, they should be doing between one and two hours of academic work at home on each day, including weekends. Please check your son's planner/diary and sign it each week. There is always something to be done and, if your son claims otherwise, please contact his Form Tutor who will rectify matters!
2. During the next week or so, your son will be given a Study Guide. It contains some useful information and sets out the basic principles of how to undertake independent academic work. I am sure it would be useful if you could manage to find the time to discuss it with your son. He will have discussed some aspects of the booklet with his Form Tutor
3. Assessment and academic monitoring:
  - November – HTA1
  - November – Year 7 Parents' Evening
  - December – Autumn Term Report
  - February – HTA2
  - May – HTA3
  - June Examinations
  - July – Summer Term Report

HTA stands for Half Term Assessment and is a "grade card" with subject information on both attainment and effort. We benchmark this against nationally derived targets from Year 8, but prefer not to do so in Year 7 as it allows us to get to know your sons' strengths and weaknesses. Of course, for those who are perhaps struggling with aspects of the curriculum, whether it be one of their subjects or homework, you may prefer not to wait for the next phase in the assessment cycle. Your son's Form Tutor is the first port of call and this will allow any concerns to be addressed as soon as they become apparent.

4. The school periodically takes photographs of students involved in school activities for press articles, our website and other marketing materials. If you have any objection to your son being included in such photographs, please contact Miss Michaela Riches (Marketing Director) at [m.riches@merchanttaylor.com](mailto:m.riches@merchanttaylor.com) or via the usual phone number.

Pupils may not take photographs in school without the Headmaster's permission. Mobile phones with camera attachments may be brought into school, but must not be used for taking photographs.

5. Internet use is monitored through the SurfControl system, together with periodic checking of access records by staff. You may also be interested to know that the Home Office has published a document entitled 'Keep Your Child Safe on the Internet' which is available for download on the school website. If you have any queries about Internet safety, please feel free to contact our Network Manager, Richard Jones, at [rmj@merchanttaylor.com](mailto:rmj@merchanttaylor.com).
6. Many boys represent the school in a variety of sports throughout their school careers. Leave of absence from games on a particular occasion can only be considered if a written request is brought to the teacher in charge well in advance.

Your son will also be given a sports fixture card and we shall be very grateful for your co-operation in planning the arrangements for attendance and collection from matches against other schools both at the weekend and midweek. In addition to a very full fixture list for the Under 12 XV A and B squads, there are also C team matches, and cross country and swimming fixtures. The team and reserves are posted well in advance but of course injury and sickness can necessitate last minute changes. We ask for your co-operation in ensuring the school can field the best possible team on all occasions.

Boys should wear school uniform to and from matches and we ask that parents arrive in good time to drop off their sons for away fixtures and allow enough time, should the coach be earlier than planned or even delayed, to collect them promptly upon return. This is particularly important when teams arrive back in the dark.

You will have received a copy of our Autumn Term Forthcoming Events and I hope you will be able to support as many events as possible. This information may also be accessed on the school website ([www.merchanttaylor.com](http://www.merchanttaylor.com)).

7. If you are at all concerned about any aspect of your son's academic or general progress, you should make contact with his Form Tutor in the first instance and thereafter with Mr S G Fletcher, Head of Lower School.

Yours sincerely,

D H Cook