

# SOUTHEND HIGH SCHOOL FOR BOYS

ACADEMY GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Prittlewell Chase, Southend-on-Sea, Essex, SS0 0RG  
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18<sup>th</sup> October 2019

Dear Parents,

*In the fortnight after half-term, we have two significant events in the school's annual calendar; both of which have an impact on all pupils.*

On the evening of Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> November, we will be holding our prospective **Sixth Form open evening**. **Last year, we received the largest number of visitors 'on record', welcoming over 700 families!** The number of students from other schools was quite remarkable given the number of places we have to offer. It is a great tribute to all in the school community: staff, students, parents and former pupils that this degree of interest and enthusiasm has been secured. Our own boys from current Year 11 are expected to attend, with their parents. For many of them, seeing the number of other visitors may help them realise the value of securing a place in the Sixth Form here – *"the largest and most successful school Sixth Form in Essex"* – and the need to sustain or renew their own efforts. The Headteacher and Head of Sixth Form presentations will be at 5.00pm, 6.00pm and 7.30pm. Classroom displays are open from 5.30pm until 7.30pm.

**School closes for the afternoon after registration at 1pm on 7<sup>th</sup> November.**

**Registration, the next morning (Friday 8<sup>th</sup> November), is at 0930. Lessons start with period 2.**

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At the time of writing, we are preparing for our annual act of remembrance: this year, of course, there is an added poignancy as we approach the 2019 anniversary of the start of World War II. A significant number of former pupils and staff members lost their lives in the two world wars. In our ceremony, we appreciate their contributions, we acknowledge that war gives rise to acts of courage and heroism in a context that is often horrific or evil, and we look to a future in which nations might resolve all differences through peaceful means.

Our preparations and reflections continue throughout the calendar year, and we are acutely aware of the connections that many members of the school community have with those who served, or serve, in the armed forces.

We are delighted to be hosting, again this year, a Veterans Lunch – in association with the Royal British Legion. Our pupils will have the chance to hear their stories.

**On Monday 11<sup>th</sup> November, the school Remembrance Service will take place from 0830. Years 10–13 will attend. Years 7-9 have their own, separate, act of remembrance in the afternoon – there will be no lessons for pupils in Years 7–9 until period 3. (Year 7-9 pupils should not arrive at school until 10.40am, at the earliest and 10.55am, at the latest).**



As a school we are very active in raising funds for our own benefit, but pupils and families continue to show great generosity at Harvest time too. This year's collection took **our total donations to HARP to more than 30,000 items for the homeless**. Several years ago the school community at SHSB was set a challenge of bringing a thousand food items into school for the harvest assembly. As the needs of local homeless people become more widely understood, more and more pupils have responded. These donations reflect well on our commitment to HARP – a local charity providing support and advice to the homeless of Southend. Thank you.



**Parents are reminded of the immense benefits of modern technology** for learning, for entertainment, for communication and for social interaction. **These benefits bring with them potential pitfalls** as well, and we address issues of e-safety routinely in school. We recommend the advice to be found on the internet at <https://www.childnet.com/parents-and-carers> for anyone wishing to learn more about teenagers and the safe use of new technologies in the home.

**You are also urged to understand that, if you have provided your child with a mobile phone, you are legally responsible** for the use and content of that phone. From time to time, our young people need help in making good decisions about what they view, share or download. It doesn't help when our youngest pupils have access to communication apps that are not 'open' to their parents to view. *If your son isn't comfortable letting you see all that he does on his phone, are you comfortable with him using it in your name?*

**There is also very good evidence supporting parents who limit the time their children spend watching TV and gaming.** A recent [meta-analysis](#) (including 58 studies from 23 countries) examining the relationship between overall screen time, specific screen-based activities, and academic performance found that *although* overall screen time is not related to children's and teens' academic achievement, *the type* of screen time is.

The research team in Spain found that **TV and video game time greater than two hours a day was associated with poorer academic achievement**, while internet and mobile phone time was not. In addition, the negative effects on academic performance were larger for teens than for children: with effect sizes as great as the equivalent of two GCSE grades.



In the first weeks of term, we saw pupils setting a new record with over 150 bikes in the school sheds. The case for pupils cycling to and from school is compelling, and in the last five years **close to 250,000 pupil journeys have been undertaken by bike**. Every bike on the road is one fewer motorised vehicle journey congesting the route. Our programme of lessons and activities makes this message clear, and seeks to dispel a range of myths. Cycling is safe, is healthy, is cheap, is a lifetime habit, is swift and cyclists make better drivers (BBC Radio 4 – facts & figures).

Indeed, cycling is never a waste of time – *medical evidence demonstrates that, on average, every hour spent cycling increases life expectancy by an hour!* It has been good to see the number of Year 7 boys already making the choice to cycle, and we hope more will do so in the weeks ahead (while the weather and evening light make it easier). The key is to plan and practise a route that is cycle-safe ... this may well be different from the bus or car route, and will, almost certainly, be quicker!

For a very small number of pupils, on some days, travel by car is the only practical option. Travel by car to school on a daily basis is clearly less healthy and responsible than other options: limiting the important development of independence in travel. *We were shocked, a few years ago, when – on the one occasion that the school had to close early – there were pupils, living within 2 miles of the school, who were unable to make their own way home!*



We would like to thank all those parent drivers who have been parking safely on the roads around the school. **However, parents are reminded that all these efforts, and the school's commitment to safe journeys for all pupils, are undermined if the road markings are not properly observed. It is illegal, and hazardous to park, wait, drop-off or pick-up in the 'School Keep Clear' zone – both on Prittlewell Chase, and Holeythick Lane.** In particular, parents are advised to ensure that their child waits for them in a place that is safe and legal. It is not appropriate – nor a good example to your child – to wait for extended periods on double yellow lines.

Finally – although we often hear superb examples of our pupils acting commendably (giving up seats, helping others in need, showing courtesy) on their journeys to and from school, occasionally we discover that some of our pupils don't reflect the same behaviour on the way home, as they do on the school site. **Please talk with your child about behaviour on the bus or train, if they travel by public transport, and ensure they understand that the same standards of behaviour apply whenever they are representing the school.** Pupils, and parents, have sometimes been surprised that our jurisdiction covers pupils' journey times and we will take appropriate action, including removing season tickets or even excluding from school, if that were ever to be necessary.

Thank you.

Robin M. Bevan  
Headteacher