

Boarding News – Feb 2024

Welcome As usual, lots has happened since the last newsletter in October and many of you will have had your child/children at home with you over the Christmas period. The Easter holiday is fast approaching and after that, in no time at all many of our boarders will be sitting their GCSE and A-level examinations. It is important that everyone uses their Easter break effectively to prepare for these important exams.

As always, I hope that you enjoy seeing pictures of boarding life that follow and please don't hesitate to get in touch if you have any questions, concerns or comments – boarding@stmikes.co.uk

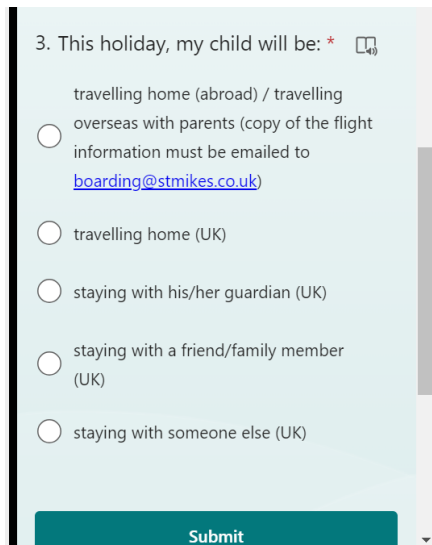
Arrival and departure information This must be collected from parents and guardians to arrange transportation to and from the school and for UKVI purposes.

It is a challenge as we approach each holiday to collect this information in a timely manner and I greatly appreciate those parents who send me flight confirmation emails as soon as flights are booked. These details are shared with all boarders so that they can try and coordinate travel plans to save on airport transport costs.

I don't book any transport until I have both the departure/arrival

flight information and a completed exeat form from the boarder.

For the upcoming Easter holiday, I will try and streamline the process by collecting travel information through a Microsoft Form (<https://forms.office.com/e/D5dMW8rBsV>). This link has been sent to you and it asks you to choose a holiday option which then links to other questions related to the choice made.



3. This holiday, my child will be: *

travelling home (abroad) / travelling overseas with parents (copy of the flight information must be emailed to boarding@stmikes.co.uk)

travelling home (UK)

staying with his/her guardian (UK)

staying with a friend/family member (UK)

staying with someone else (UK)

Submit

We break up for the Easter holiday on Friday 22nd March so please can you complete the short questionnaire by **Friday 1st March**. This will ensure enough time to book local taxis to and from the train/bus stations and private transfers to and from the airports.

Please check the school website for term dates (2023-2024 / 2024-2025)

<https://www.stmikes.co.uk/admissions/term-dates/>

Parent-teacher meetings

These were conducted online through a video call on the Parent Portal at the end of last term (8th December 2023), and it was pleasing to see that over 50% of our boarding parents had booked appointments with their child's teachers.

These appointments were timed to ensure that the majority of our parents would be able to 'attend' and I hope that you found the feedback useful.

Please disregard any communication from the school regarding face-to-face parents' evenings unless you are in the UK and plan to attend in person. There will I hope be another opportunity to speak to your child's teachers around the same time this December.

'Goodbye's' and 'Hello's'

We were sad to see Mr Jones (resident Houseparent in Parc House) leave at the end of January to rejoin his family back in New Zealand. He thoroughly enjoyed his time in Parc House and getting to know the boarders in both houses and will be missed.

After over 10 years of service, we also said goodbye to Ms Nicole who leaves us to retire to the Pembrokeshire coast and possibly Switzerland. Ms Nicole has slowly reduced her weekly hours over the past few years and again will be missed by boarders and colleagues.



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Ms Natasha will be rejoining the team after a couple of years away to complete her teachers' training course and will work shifts in both houses bringing lots of energy and mahjong to the common room.



Ms Michelle joins us as the resident houseparent for Parc House and has quickly settled in and got to know the boarders there. Michelle is a trained teacher and swim coach and has already enhanced the activity provision in Parc House.



NHS/medication/illness

Just a gentle reminder that we have a supply of over the counter (OTC) medicine to treat common complaints in both boarding houses – headaches, sore throats, period pain etc. There is no need to send any medication over with your child unless it is prescription medication, in which case I must be informed by email and the medication name/instructions must be translated into English by a doctor/pharmacist.

Any medication found in pupil rooms that has not been declared is a major breach of the school rules and will lead to disciplinary action up to and including being asked to leave boarding.

Please remember also that the healthcare system in the UK is probably very different to what you experience in your country. In most

cases in which an illness is not showing signs of improvement after a few days, we would first consult the local pharmacist who are able to administer some medications. They may advise to make an appointment with the local doctor. We are fortunate to be very close to the local hospital and this would be our first port-of-call for any serious medical issue.

We are fortunate at St. Mike's to have a resilient group of boarders who will generally only ask to stay in their rooms if they are feeling really unwell as they understand the importance of being in lessons. I meet regularly with nurses from within our group of schools and can seek their advice. One of their best pieces of advice is that 'it's ok and normal to feel unwell occasionally' and 'that triggers for why someone may experience headaches for example should be explored before administering medication – screentime, sleep patterns etc.'

I would like to thank the vast majority of our boarders who keep themselves in good physical and mental health by good basic hygiene, a good diet, plenty of sleep and exercise.

International day This is one of the highlights of the school year and you will have seen many pictures in Mr Ferrari's recent newsletter and on the school's regularly updated Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/StMichaelsSchoolLlanelli>)

Our international boarders by definition contribute much to this day and it was great to see the effort that went into national dress and cooking. Mrs Dorrington and I in Tenby House and Ms Michelle in Parc House open our kitchens the night before and it is a hive of

activity as boarders take it in turns to prepare and cook their national dishes.





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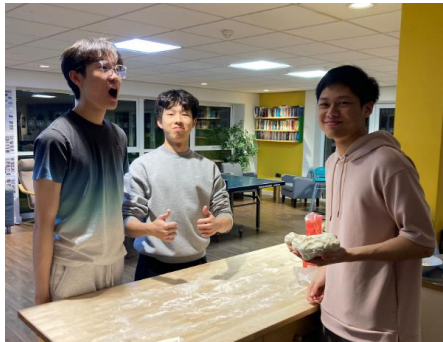
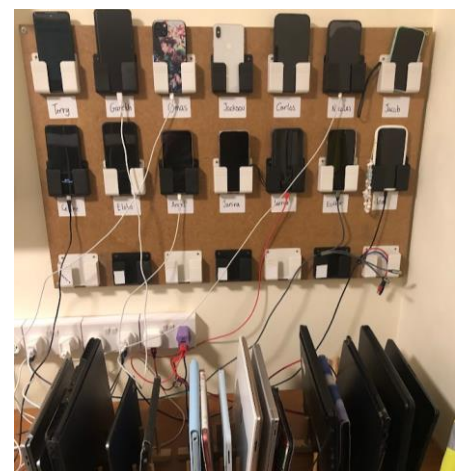
Parc House device time

Another reminder that we collect in the electronic devices from Parc House boarders on school nights (Sunday – Thursday) to ensure that they get a good night's sleep. Older boarders are permitted to keep them overnight at the weekend.

Again, I would like to recommend that parents, particularly those of our younger boarders have made use of ScreenTime (iOS) or Family Link (Android) to monitor and control phone/app use during the evenings and weekends.

Like all schools, our WiFi network is filtered and monitored but we have no control over what your child can access over 4/5G networks provided by their phone providers.

Below is how Parc House store their devices each evening and staff will randomly check that phones are genuine and have a working SIM card installed. Although a rare occurrence, it is always disappointing when we discover a second phone, tablet or laptop and it leads to a loss of privileges for the rest of that term.





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Snapshots of the term:

Quiz and pizza night at Tenby House won by Issac, Liubomyr, Austin and Ross



The ever-popular Escape Room activity in Carmarthen:



My attempt at a HK dish of rice, spam and egg for a weekend breakfast:



Pupil-led Sunday afternoon activities in Parc House:



Tabletop curling game:



Parc House trip to the local pantomime:



A now almost weekly 'boy's dance night'!



Dental talk by visiting dentist in Tenby House:



Afterschool art club:





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Emma and Mrs Dorrington on the Christmas ski trip:



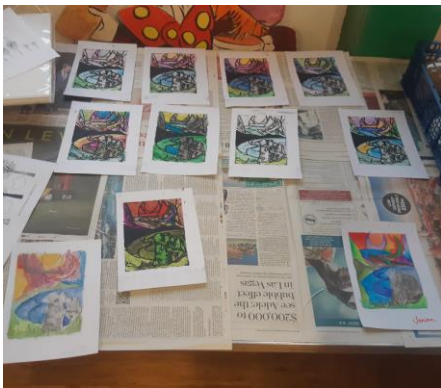
Tenby House Escape Rooms:



All sorts!



Gower Heritage Centre:



Another Tenby House quiz night:



Spa night at Parc House:

Archery session:





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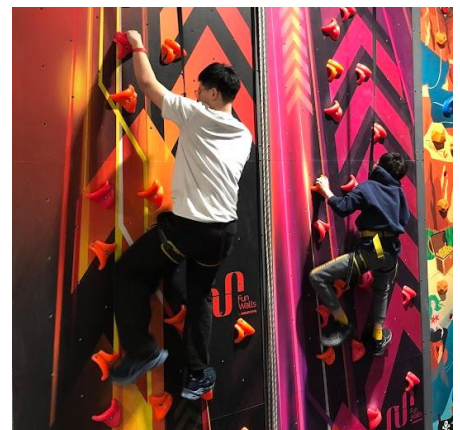
Parc House Bake-Off:



Lawn bowls in Swansea:



Climbing in Swansea:





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Parc and Tenby community litter pick:



Shakespeare Speaks evening:

