

QUEEN MARY'S SCHOOL

Our Aim: to be a happy, academically excellent and financially secure family school for girls of all abilities (and boys up to the age of 8).

Our Method: by nurturing, sustaining and encouraging the children to develop all their given talents, within an atmosphere of mutual trust and toleration

Our Purpose: children will be able to move on to their senior schools or colleges with confidence and to lead successful Christian lives.

The Values and Ethos of Queen Mary's School are described at Appendix 1.

ACADEMIC MATTERS

The core of the school's Academic Curriculum is the National Curriculum, which is summarised at Appendix 2. The school's Academic Policy is summarised at Appendix 3.

Particular attention is paid to the transition points between Key Stages (Reception moving into Year 1, Year 2 moving into Year 3, etc) to ensure that learning is continuous, coherent and planned. The advantage to the children of remaining in one school is that there is no dip in expectation or performance between Key Stages.

From Year 4 onwards children may be grouped or set for some or all lessons. The school's setting policy is described at Appendix 4.

Lessons are arranged on a two week timetable (Week One and Week Two). Saturday school is compulsory for those in Year 6 and upwards. There is no Saturday school at Leave-Outs and Half-Terms (see Blue Book for dates). Lessons end at 4:10pm each day when voluntary activities start.

Preps to reinforce teaching are set throughout the school, from Year 2 onwards. In Year 2 preps will be set from time to time and will generally be based on learning spellings and tables. From Year 3 onwards the preps will be set more regularly, and, in addition to spellings and tables, may include written work. From Year 5 onwards children will be set a written or learning prep daily – 20 minutes in Year 5, 40 minutes in Year 6 and so on up to 90 minutes or more in the GCSE years.

In addition to SATs (see Appendix 2 on the National Curriculum) exams are set for the whole school in the Summer Term, and for Years 7 and up in the Autumn Term. Objective tests of ability and achievement (Cognitive Ability Tests, MIDYIS and YELLIS) are sat in the appropriate years in order to enable teachers to set realistic and challenging academic targets and to provide the school with an objective measure of value added. Parents who wish to know more about these tests should speak to the Director of Studies.

The school offers academic, art and music scholarships to children entering Years 7, 8 and 9. Exams and interviews are held in the Spring Term. More details are at Appendix 5.

During the term teachers and tutors continually monitor each child's progress. Credits and Commendations are awarded for good and exceptional work (see Rewards and Sanctions under Discipline). Effort grades are reviewed internally at half term and parents informed if there is cause for concern. At the end of each term a full report is written for each subject on each child. The child's effort and attainment in relation to the rest of the form are detailed – see Appendix 6. At Mark Reading, held at the end of each term, prizes are awarded for the highest attainers in each form, for those who have made the greatest efforts and progress, and for those who have gained large numbers of house points through commendations, credits and other activity.

MUSIC

Music plays an integral part in the life of the school. There is a full-time Director of Music and Assistant Director of Music, together with 13 visiting specialist music staff. There is a wealth of musical activity available for your daughter to take part in, both individually and as part of an ensemble. The emphasis is on enjoyment whilst attaining high standards.

Curriculum Music From Year 1 onwards, each class will usually have one hour's lesson of music per week in curriculum time (GCSE classes will have much more). Topics covered include types of music, from classical to jazz and modern music, practical sessions involving composition, group music making and work on percussion and keyboards, and listening exercises. Class singing plays a large role in practical activities.

Instrumental Music A very large proportion of the girls play at least one instrument. We offer individual lessons across the whole range of orchestral instruments, as well as piano, singing, guitar, and kit drums. Lessons are on an individual basis, lasting 40 minutes, and parents are billed directly by the teacher, currently £179 per 10 lessons. A rotation system operates for all pupils in Years 1-9 but we try to fix lessons for pupils in Years 10 & 11, as they approach their GCSEs. Many girls play 2 instruments (some 3 or 4) – currently we give 162 lessons per week.

- **2nd instruments** We suggest that before starting a second instrument the girl should have reached at least Grade 2 standard on her first 'study'. This is done to ensure that the new instrument, in a wave of enthusiasm, does not take over all the available practice time to the detriment of the first. Some will be able to cope with the demands more easily than others and so we look at each pupil individually, encouraging her to consider carefully the time factors involved. If your daughter would like to have a trial lesson on any instrument, or you would like to discuss the suitability of taking lessons, please contact the Director of Music.
- **Practising** In an age of 'instant gratification' it is important that your daughter understands the level of commitment required to make progress. Daily practice is expected on each instrument with boarders in Prep school having supervised timetabled practice after breakfast; Senior school boarders find their own suitable times. Daygirls are welcome to practise in school at

lunchtimes or after school in one of the 10 practice studios (all equipped with a piano). Double instrumentalists have to find two practice slots.

- **Instrumental Hire** School instruments are often available for hire should you wish your daughter to 'try before you buy'. The hire cost (currently £25 per term) includes having the instrument during the holidays. We would hope that after a year the pupil will have her own; the department can offer advice on the purchase of this.

Musical Activities The school encourages participation in a wide variety of choirs and ensembles. There are three major public concerts per year. In the Autumn term the St Cecilia's Day concert takes place in November; the Spring term ends with an Ensembles concert and at the end of the Summer term the Senior Choir usually performs in Ripon Cathedral, with a small professional orchestra. Other regular concerts throughout the year include Chapel Choir singing at a Charity Christmas candlelight concert in December at a local church and the Music Award Holders' concert in the Summer term, when these girls 'play for their supper'. The latter is shared with the Chapel Choir.

- **Weekly Lunchtime Concerts** Any girl who learns an instrument is expected to play twice in public during the academic year. The Lunchtime concert gives musicians the opportunity to gain confidence in performing in front of a small but select audience, consisting purely of girls and some instrumental teachers, without the pressure of having parents present. Of course the girls may perform as often as they or their teachers wish; 'music points' act as another carrot in rewarding all appearances.
- **Evening Concerts** There are about 7 Evening Concerts per year. These are held on a Friday night at 7pm (preceded by drinks for the audience at 6:30pm) and are more formal, in that parents are encouraged to attend. Performances are expected to be more polished but anyone may play, with age and standards ranging from Year 1 to Year 11/pre Grade 1 to post Grade 8.

The following gives an idea of standards required for the various activities:

- **Chapel Choir:** this is the flagship choir and consists of the best singers in the school. Usually about 24 strong, auditions are held every September for girls in Year 7-11. The choir sings at the fortnightly Eucharist, gives regular concerts in and outside school and competes in local and national festivals. A high level of commitment is expected from all members. There are two rehearsals every week, the second on Saturday morning ending at 12.45.
- **Senior Choir:** includes Chapel Choir. A larger choir of around 60 girls from Years 7-11. Entry is by audition in September. The choir performs at school concerts and usually sings in Ripon Cathedral at least twice a year in addition to leading the Carol Service at the end of the Autumn term. There is usually one rehearsal a week, increasing to two in the Summer term (in preparation for the end of term concert in Holy Trinity church, Ripon).
- **Middle Choir:** this is a voluntary choir for Years 7 & 8 only, led by the Music Award Holders in these years. It is a helpful intermediate step between Junior & Senior Choirs, particularly for those who are keen to improve their voice.

There is one rehearsal a week included in the lesson timetable and performances include school concerts and local competitive festivals.

- **Junior Choir:** Years 3-6 sing together as a timetabled lesson every Friday afternoon. The choir performs at 3 concerts a year, including its own in the Summer Term. It also provides the music for the KS2 Christmas production and sings Evensong in Ripon Cathedral in the Summer Term.

Instrumental activities. *Most of these ensemble activities prepare for performance in the two main instrumental concerts, held in November and at the end of the Spring term. Most rehearsals take place after school, at some time between 4.20 – 6.10, timings dependent on other activities. Some ensembles stop rehearsing during the Summer term, due to examination commitments. Entry is according to standard rather than age.*

- **Orchestra:** Usually about 35 players with a general minimum standard of around Grade 3 for entry. There is one rehearsal a week in the Autumn and Spring terms. Repertoire varies from mainstream classical to lighter arrangements. Rehearsals usually stop in the Summer term.
- **String Orchestra:** Usually about a dozen players, with rehearsals one lunchtime. The required standard is also around Grade 3 upwards and concert items are prepared for the major musical events.
- **Training Strings:** for the less advanced string player, from almost beginner to about Grade 2, though the Leader is more advanced. This is used to encourage involvement in group playing from as early a stage as is practicable. Concert appearances are usually twice yearly, with rehearsals continuing until half term in the Summer.
- **String Quartets:** There have been as many as five of these (varying standards of entry), rehearsed by peripatetic staff once a week and performing publicly when ready, either in the main concerts or at Friday Evening concerts. Girls often decide to take part in the annual Armour Chamber Music Competition held in the Spring term.
- **Wind Band:** For Wind players (both woodwind and brass) of about Grade 3 standard and above, often (but not exclusively) playing music of a jazzy style.
- **Ukuleles: a Year 6 lunchtime activity**
- **Handbells: a Year 5 lunchtime activity**
- **Recorders: a Years 3 & 4 lunchtime activity**
- **Rock Bands:** These are formed by the girls themselves, from Year 8 upwards. Depending upon numbers there is a weekly rehearsal for each group, supervised by the Guitar teacher – the charge for this is £20 per term. Currently there are about 8 in school. Rehearsals aim for a Christmas concert and the annual *Battle of the Bands* competition each Spring term, with the

winner also playing in the end of term Spring concert. The Bands also give a concert on the last night of the Summer term. (The players usually have individual lessons in school.) There is a separate 'Band' room complete with a PA system, drum kit and a variety of keyboard instruments.

Years 1 & 2 Years 1 and 2 have a music lesson once a week. Many start individual instrumental lessons in Year 2. The children take part in many of the junior and senior school concerts. There is also a Christmas play that incorporates singing and percussion under the guidance of the Assistant Director of Music.

Music Theory This is a requirement for any musician wishing to progress beyond Grade 5 in any instrument, including voice. Voluntary classes are offered at lunchtimes to anyone who has reached around Grade 3 at a practical level (and who has ambitions of going on to Grades 6-8), with the aim of attaining Grade 5 Theory in good time. Some girls go on beyond this level. Currently this is offered free.

Music /Drama Currently there is a production mounted by Year 7 each year – most recently 'The Evacuees', 'The Good Old Days', 'My Fair Lady', 'The King and I', 'Oliver' and 'Oklahoma'. Music also plays a role in the KS2 Christmas production and the Early Years' Christmas and Summer concerts. Further collaboration with other departments takes place as and when the occasion demands.

Music Scholarships There are 3 awards available (11+, 12+ & 13+) with the auditions held early in February. Awards are made based on potential as much as exams passed but the following gives an idea of expected levels of performance standards:

11+ - approx Grade 3 on 1st instrument, with a 2nd instrument/singing an advantage

12+ - approx Grade 4 on 1st instrument, with a 2nd instrument expected

13+ - approx Grade 5 on 1st instrument, with 2nd instrument expected.

Successful candidates are expected to take Music as a GCSE Option. For further details of audition requirements, and the role that the Award Holders play in the work of the department, please contact the School Secretary. The Director of Music will also be happy to give advice and discuss any potential entry at any time.

Music 'Rewards' In addition to the pleasure afforded by playing music for its own sake, up to 3 *music points* can be awarded at each instrumental lesson, as an incentive to practise. 3 points also gain the pupil a *commendation*. Solo performances at a lunchtime concert gain 3 points but a public concert performance (i.e. whole school or parent-attended) gains 5 points. Totals go towards the House Music Shield – awarded each term. Book tokens are awarded to those with most points in Years 3-6, 7-8, S1-S3. The **Ryan Practice Awards** (book tokens) are a further incentive for regular practice. These are awarded to any girl who gains an average effort mark of 1.5 or better over the term.

SPORT

At Queen Mary's, Physical Education develops pupils' physical competence and confidence, and their ability to use these skills to perform a wide range of activities. It provides opportunities for pupils irrespective of ability to be creative, competitive and to face different challenges as individuals, in groups and as part of a team.

Games lessons are therefore a combination of: maximizing participation, improving achievement and team development. This will enhance pupils' level of performance and develop the desire to succeed. It is our aim that staff to pupil ratios are in line with other subjects, which frequently allows two members of staff to team teach. Lessons are differentiated to meet the needs of the individual. Team coaching does, on rare occasions take place during lessons if for example, an important tournament is happening.

Clubs

Clubs are open to all pupils irrespective of ability. They are held both at lunchtime and afterschool and there will be, on occasion, extra sessions such as pre-season training. All clubs are once a week for each sport for all age groups, although some age groups may be grouped together. They are used to enhance skills learnt and also to develop greater tactics often through game play. Pupils who are part of a team squad are expected to attend these clubs.

Team Selection

Team selection is based on ability and commitment in lessons and clubs. We always aim to field our strongest team, especially for A team matches. We do try to arrange B team fixtures throughout the year to provide girls who work hard in lessons and in clubs an opportunity to experience competitive situations against other schools as well as the privilege of representing Queen Mary's. However, as not all girls will play for a school team, we try to ensure all pupils are part of a house team. These house matches for Year 5 to S3 are very competitive and occur at least once a term.

Teams will be selected and put on the games notice board by Tuesday and on the Parents' Pages of the school web site by Wednesday for a Saturday Fixture, and for a mid week fixture this will be done at the first available opportunity.

Teams

In Years 1 and 2 pupils take part in sports matches against other schools in a variety of activities. These fixtures are usually based on either swimming, cross-country or typical sports day type activities. All children have the opportunity to attempt grade badges in swimming and gymnastics. A swimming gala and gym competition are held in the course of the year and medals are awarded. The school runs a number of teams for both team games and individual sports/activities from year 3 upwards. From Year 7 upwards, Area, Regional, Invitation and National competitions are entered in most sports. Talented girls are encouraged and supported to attend Area and County Trials.

It is our aim to get all fixtures into the Blue Book for the beginning of term, but invariably a number of fixtures are made during the term. When this happens they are posted on the games notice board and the school web site.

Parents are always welcome to watch matches. If there is a match on Saturday afternoon there will be a match tea and Parents' tea afterwards. If the match is a home match parents are urged not to leave until after the visiting team has departed, so their children may see their visitors off correctly, and help clear up after the opposition has left.

Captains

Captains are chosen based upon suitability. It may not be the best player, but the most organised, positive and enthusiastic member of the team. In year groups where there are a few girls with these traits, then captains may be rotated.

Colours

School colours are awarded at the discretion of the PE department. It is based on ability, effort and commitment. Highly commended awards will be given to those girls who also show a great deal of effort and commitment.

Sports Captains and Vice Captains

Sports Captains and Vice Captains are expected to assist at matches, helping to sort out equipment and tidy up afterwards. They are also asked to assist at junior clubs.

Award Schemes

Currently we offer Gymnastics award schemes. Anyone is able to take these awards if they attend gym club. The girls will also be able to take swimming awards during the Spring term. A Queen Mary's Athletics Award will also be run during the Summer term.

Sports Day

Sports Day plays a major part in the Summer term with emphasis on participation. All children, regardless of ability, take part and try their very best for their house. House points are awarded to encourage participation and competition, amongst the sporty and less sporty alike. Note that spikes are not allowed in years 6 and below.

Games Kit

Girls should wear blue socks, blue pants, blue skirt and blue airtex shirt for PE lessons and appropriate footwear (trainers, hockey or lacrosse boots). They may wear a blue sweatshirt and blue tracksuit bottoms. They should wear a mouthguard for lacrosse and hockey, and shin pads for hockey. They will need a navy or black costume and a cap in their house colour for swimming. They will need a leotard with either leggings or shorts and a blue airtex shirt for dance, gymnastics and athletics. A light blue sweatshirt may be purchased if the girl plays for a lacrosse team. A red sweatshirt and red socks are worn by the 1st XI Hockey Team. All items of PE kit must be named on the outside.

RIDING

The Equestrian Centre is run by Pam Ashworth, who may be contacted on 07974 978253. Girls of all abilities, from beginner to eventer are taught to ride by qualified and experienced staff. Girls may keep their own ponies at the Centre or borrow school ponies. All rates are set by Mrs Ashworth, who runs the centre as an independent business, paying rent to the school to cover the cost of the school's investment in facilities and buildings. The school maintains an interest in areas such as Health and Safety and licensing.

CHRISTIAN DEVELOPMENT

Queen Mary's belongs to a family of schools called the Woodard Corporation. It was founded in 1847 by an Anglican priest, Nathaniel Woodard, whose vision was that young people should enjoy their education within the framework of the Christian faith as it is expressed in the teachings and sacramental tradition of the Church of England. At Queen Mary's we endeavour to fulfil the vision of our founder in a number of very definite ways. We begin each day with corporate reflection and prayer. This opens with a hymn, which is followed by the presentation of a theme given by the Chaplain or the Headmaster or by other members of staff or by the girls themselves. Finally we pray together and the Chaplain gives a Blessing.

The Eucharist is celebrated with Years 8-11 at 8.40am on Week 1 Tuesdays and on major festivals like Candlemas, Ash Wednesday and Ascension Day. The singing is led by the Chapel Choir and we often have a guest preacher. Years 5-7 also celebrate the Eucharist in Chapel at 8.40.am on Week 2 Tuesdays, which is specially designed for younger children. As a consequence of changes in the Church of England rites for Christian Initiation we are now able to offer children in Years 5 and 6 preparation for Holy Communion before Confirmation. Details about this will be sent to parents during the current academic year. On Thursday mornings each week our youngest children, Nursery – Year 4, have their own service in chapel. Parents are most welcome to come to any of these services, which are all listed in the "Blue Book". At the end of each term there is a Eucharist for the whole school which is held in the Great Hall.

The Chaplain works together with the staff in Early Years and Key Stage 1 to ensure that children are given an awareness of our Christian ethos right from the beginning of their time at Queen Mary's. We encourage regular reading and teaching of the Holy Scriptures and foster contacts with the local and wider church. Girls are encouraged to explore and discuss religious ideas and beliefs in an open and constructive way.

The Chaplain prepares girls for confirmation and first communion. The Confirmation group meets once a week during the Spring and Summer terms. Any pupils from Years 7-11 are invited towards the end of the Autumn term to consider in consultation with their parents whether they would like to be confirmed. The Confirmation Service is always held at school in the Summer term and is conducted by the Bishop of Whitby. As well as leading worship the Chaplain has an important pastoral role and girls know that they can speak to him in total confidence. Parents also are welcome to contact the Chaplain at any time either through the Office or on his direct line (01845 575024).

Queen Mary's prides itself on promoting good relationships with Christians of all traditions and offers special provision for Roman Catholic members of the school in association with Ampleforth College. One of their priests (Fr Leo) comes two or three times each term to say Mass. Mrs Williams (01845 575015) is the school catechist for Roman Catholics and meets regularly with those girls on a Monday lunchtime. She also prepares girls for first communion and for confirmation. The Bishop of Middlesbrough comes every other year to take the Confirmation Service. We are unique amongst Church of England schools in being allowed to hold a Roman Catholic confirmation in our own school chapel.

We are very fortunate to have a purpose built Chapel in the school which is always open for prayer and available as a space for peaceful reflection and meditation. Parents are very welcome to use the Chapel at any time.

PASTORAL CARE

The person most directly concerned with a child's pastoral care is the child's tutor, who will be the form teacher up to Year 6. Tutors are responsible for the academic and pastoral supervision of their tutees, for monitoring their progress, extracurricular activities, achievements, both within and outside school, acting as a source of advice, keeping other staff (including SEN staff, matrons, and head) informed of significant developments, and keeping in close touch with parents. Tutors are appointed for the whole of Key Stage 3, and then again for the GCSE years. Tutors write to parents at the start of each academic year to introduce themselves and to offer contact details. Children are, of course, free to discuss any matters with matrons, the head, or any other member of staff, but, unless confidentiality issues are involved, the tutor will always be informed of such discussions so that a complete picture may be maintained. Mrs Hannam-Walpole as Deputy Head is responsible for all Pastoral Care matters including Child Protection.

Some members of staff are trained as counsellors, and can in turn help to train older girls and prefects. An independent counsellor is available to offer external counselling support when required.

Queen Mary's School Council is run by the pupils and is a way of involving the girls in the life of their school. It is an elected body of pupils whose purpose is to represent their classes and to be a forum for active and constructive pupil input into the daily life of the school community.

There are two councils: lower school and upper school, run by the prefects. Each council meets once every half term to discuss relevant and interesting issues. There may be times when a whole council meeting will be necessary to discuss matters relating to the whole school.

At the start of each term a council member is chosen from each form. This member will change each term. Each council member raises points relevant to her year. The prefects will take any points/issues to the appointed teacher who will raise them with the staff.

In essence, the Council is an arena for discussion on issues where pupils should have a voice, it is a way of recognising achievement of pupils and letting the entire school know what is happening in the other years and in this way provides an invaluable

method of communication. It also increases the confidence and public speaking skills of its participants.

The School Nurse (Mrs Beaumont) is at school Monday to Friday mornings. She can see all girls as required, but only those registered with the school doctor (Dr Rajan) can make an appointment to see the doctor during her weekly visits. However, she can see day girls with an urgent medical problem if she is on the school premises. Accidents will be dealt with in the school surgery, at Thirsk Minor Injury Unit or taken to Northallerton A&E if serious. Every effort will be made to inform parents if treatment is required.

Should a girl become ill during school hours, parents will be contacted as soon as possible and arrangements made for your daughter to come home if deemed necessary. Any medication should be handed in at the start of the school day to a housemistress or the school nurse. Day girls should have an accompanying letter, stating their name, medication to be given, dosage, time of administration and a signature.

Head lice can be an ongoing problem within school environments. For day girls it is a parental responsibility to check their daughter's hair at least weekly. Boarders are checked regularly during the term time by the matrons and treated accordingly. If you require any information about head lice please contact the school nurse on 575045.

Parents of Full and Weekly boarders will receive a separate handbook detailing boarding arrangements. Parents who wish their children to board occasionally (flexiboarding) should contact the Housemistress as early as possible to discuss arrangements, including bedding and laundry.

Tuck should not be brought into school. There is a tuck shop three times a week for boarders. All food and drink, including breaks, is provided by the school kitchens. All food is prepared in the kitchens, using fresh ingredients. Day girls who wish to arrive for breakfast or who need to stay to supper may do so as long as they have booked in. Currently no extra charge is made for these meals. Parents are welcome to visit meals to observe the standard of food on offer. They may come to lunch if they inform the kitchens by 12 o'clock on the day of their visit.

ACTIVITIES

Voluntary activities to enhance teaching and to develop each child's character are generally carried out at lunchtimes, at the end of each school day and at weekends. The majority are free, but some will include outside instructors and will need to be charged. Activities are organised termly. The Deputy Head writes to all parents at the beginning of each term to detail activities on offer and to invite participation.

Some activities are a necessary part of education (eg theatre trips for those taking Drama GCSE, geography field trips) and others are recommended as part of each child's personal development (eg "Crucial Crew" safety and awareness training in Year 6). Where activities or trips are to be charged parents will be informed in advance and their permission sought. If parents do not want their child to participate every effort will be made to offer alternative teaching at school.

Book fayres are held, once per term. In the Spring or Summer Term, Poetry Day invites pupils of all ages to recite published and original poems to the whole school. Also in the Spring Term, World Book Day provides a variety of special events promoting the love of reading. Author visits are a feature of these two special days. In addition, theatre and other educational visits that support pupils' English and Drama studies - including theatre groups who visit Queen Mary's - are arranged throughout the year.

Drama has a strong tradition at Queen Mary's. Various teachers will from time to time arrange whole year or special plays and musicals. Parents are again strongly encouraged to allow and enable their children to attend all rehearsals, and to support performances. Speaking and acting skills (and confidence and fluency) may be developed through coaching for LAMDA awards. Further information may be obtained from the Head of English, or from Mrs Coghlan, whose contact details are in the Blue Book.

DISCIPLINE

The immediate goal of the disciplinary structure at Queen Mary's is sound personal development and an understanding of social responsibility. The long-term objective is to foster the growth of inner personal freedom – the achievement of self-discipline and a “delight in virtue”. Our response to breaches of good conduct is both firm and compassionate. We make every allowance for personal circumstance but we ensure that justice is seen to be done so that every child knows where she stands. Between child and school there is a covenant of respect and obligation. Every child knows that she will find in the school a source of adult support and strength, from her tutor and from every member of the school community.

Rewards and Sanctions. The system of rewards and sanctions is described at Appendix 7.

Bullying. The school is resolutely opposed to bullying in any form. Children are regularly spoken to, during school prayers, during PHSE lessons, by form teachers and tutors, about bullying and what they should do if they encounter it. The advice is summarised in their Planners and repeated at Appendix 8. Prefects discuss bullying during their training and during the term. All Staff are given further written and other advice. Parents who are concerned about bullying should immediately speak to their child's tutor.

Dress. The Dress Code is at Appendix 9. Parents are particularly requested to note the rules on jewellery and ear-rings. Girls with pierced ears should wear only plain gold or silver studs.

Mobile Phones and Laptops. Girls may bring mobile phones and laptops to school. Parents should ensure that they are adequately insured. Rules governing their use are entirely common sense – if they are abused the phone or laptop will be removed.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parents are encouraged to be fully involved in their child's education. Their first point of contact should be their child's tutor. It is usually much better to make an appointment to see the tutor than to try to explain concerns at the beginning of the day while tutors are trying to take the register and get children ready for prayers. Each tutor has an email address which is listed in the Blue Book.

Blue Book The Blue Book is sent out to the parents and pupils at the beginning of each term all events to which parents are particularly invited are shown in bold in the Blue Book and include:

- Matches, whether inter-house or against other schools
- Concerts, including Friday Evening Concerts
- Plays
- The Carol Service: The annual Carol Service is held at Ripon Cathedral. All girls from year 3 upwards are required to attend and will sit in their classes. Younger children, parents and friends of the school are welcome to attend. Parents of day girls are responsible for the transport of their daughters to and from the Cathedral.
- Speech Day is a celebration of the efforts and achievements of the academic year and is compulsory for all children in Year 3 upwards. All parents are invited to attend and join in the recognition of the pupils' hard work and results. There is a separate "mini" Speech Day for the Pre-Prep, usually held the day before Speech Day.
- Sports Day
- Fireworks evening
- Parent Teacher consultations for their child's year.
- Eucharist on Tuesday mornings and RC Mass (see Blue Book)

If parents have general concerns about the school or their year they may wish to talk to the Parent Rep for their year. Contact details are in the Blue Book. The Terms of Reference for Parent Reps are at Appendix 10. The complaints procedure for the school is detailed at Appendix 11. The terms and conditions applying from first acceptance of each pupil are at Appendix 13.

Absence. Parents are particularly requested not to take children out of school during the school day, nor to take them away early at the end of term or return them late at the start of term. All such absences have an effect on our teaching of the other children. Some cases are unavoidable. Please ensure you email your child's tutor well in advance, by email, so that work can be set, if necessary, and teaching plans amended where possible.

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

Term Dates. Each independent school in the country sets its own term dates. Public exams dictate some dates for senior schools. Term Dates including Half Terms and Leave Outs are as far as possible tied in with those of other Yorkshire schools and with state schools. Where there is a clash we try first to agree dates with Aysgarth

School. Future dates are included in the Blue Book and draft dates for the next two years are included in the Parents' Pages on the school website.

School Buses. We currently provide six minibus services, listed in the Blue Book. If you wish to use this service please contact Alison Tuley in the office. If you currently use one of our buses and there is a change in your daughter's plans please contact the bus driver as soon as possible; all our drivers are equipped with hands free mobile phones and listen to their messages regularly.

Addresses. Please keep the office informed of any changes in addresses, telephone numbers or email address.

Texting and Emails. This is a very effective way for the school office to communicate to the parents. We do endeavour not to abuse this mode of communication. Parents will be informed, every two weeks, when a school mailing has been put on the web page. We will also notify parents if there are cancellations to fixtures, last minute changes to return times and bad weather communications.

Registration and Absences. Registration is taken twice a day 8.30am and 2.10pm (Sat 8.30am only Y6-11). If your child is ill please can you notify the office between 8 and 8.15am. If your child needs to attend an appointment or leave school for any reason she must 'sign out' at the office and 'sign in' when she returns before she goes to lessons. If there is a fire alert it is imperative that we know where all the children are.

School Mailings Every two weeks a school mailing is posted on the school web page and the parents are notified via email or text. The school mailing gives listings of all the dates of fixtures and events for the following two weeks, highlighting any changes to times and locations and also communications from the teachers. All school mailing dates are printed in the Blue Book.

Ordering School Uniform. If your daughter requires items of uniform please contact Mrs Simpson on 01845 575036. The School Shop is open on Mondays and Fridays.

Pocket Money. Day children do not need pocket money at school except in particular circumstances (eg trips, charity events). The Housemistress will issue pocket money to boarders only. Parents are asked to confirm in writing permission for a child to charge any expenditure to their account.

LEAVERS

Parents should consult the Head as early as possible about their choices for their child's next school. He knows the other Heads and has visited nearly all the senior schools to which we have sent children in the past, and will visit any other school suggested by a parent.

Common Entrance and 11 plus. We prepare children for Common Entrance and external Scholarship exams at 11+ and 13+. Details are at Appendix 12.

At GCSE. Choice of school will be governed by availability of suitable A Level or other courses as well as the school itself. Parents of girls in S2 will be invited to an interview with the Head, the Careers teacher (Mrs Gormley), the child's tutor and their daughter to discuss options. ISCO (the Independent Schools Careers Organisation) offers support, advice and the Morrisby Test, which can help a girl decide what sort of career she might like to pursue. Details may be obtained from Mrs Gormley.

After GCSEs. Once they have finished GCSE exams girls in S3 will spend a week doing work experience (placements will previously have been decided in consultation with parents) and then a final week of Life Skills, which will include First Aid, self-defence, drugs awareness, car maintenance, home maintenance, interview techniques, and other skills necessary to their self-sufficiency.