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Dear Parent,

It has been good to get back to School routines and it is always a pleasure to listen to the news and adventures that the pupils excitedly share, returning to a new term.

Pupils have quickly settled into work and there is an industrious feel in the School. The seniors in College are beginning to prepare for the external examination phase and the Lower School pupils appear to be picking up on the importance of sustained effort. This is good to see and is important, as an assessment week will not be far away. Please would parents keep checking pupil prep diaries to ensure that all work is kept up to date.

It was a pleasure to say well done to a good number of pupils in Years 7 and 8 who have improved their reading age scores since the last assessment phase. It is important that pupils read for pleasure for at least a short time each day and thanks are extended to parents for their support with this.

Sister Davies has asked me to remind parents to keep unwell children at home. We have a number of pupils in School who are particularly susceptible to serious harm should they come into contact with chicken pox or chest infections etc. Sister Davies asks that children with stomach upsets or sickness are kept at home for 48 hours after the last symptoms have been experienced. We will continue to encourage the use of hand sanitizer and handkerchiefs in School over the winter period.

Mr Rylands was bursting with news about Lower School shooting when we spoke earlier in the week. He was proud to share that participation has risen again with around 60% of Lower School pupils regularly shooting at some point during the week. The high skill standard and increased interest, allows development of shooters capable of performing to a very high standard in competition. We really do encourage shooting for pupils in Lower School as it sets a wonderful base for the success achieved at National level in the senior part of School. Please contact Mr Rylands about any aspect of shooting in School: tom.rylands@ellesmere.com.

The swimmers have been extremely busy over the holiday. One piece of news that came through was that Tristan Aspinall competed at the Bristol meet over the weekend. He gained gold medals and broke 3 of the long standing club records. Well done Tristan!

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The Games Department request that pupils have full tracksuits and warm kit over the next few weeks. Some pupils were cold this week. Pupils may travel home in full tracksuits if they have a sport club immediately after School. Permission should be requested in the first instance from tutors please. Otherwise full School uniform is the order of the day.

The pupils looked extremely smart on their return on Monday. This is lovely to see. The School Shop has a warm and waterproof coat available. It is important that pupils have a coat in School and gloves plus hats are sensible during the colder weather for lunchtimes and break times. Please remember that pupils should have their hair tied back and unless with prior agreement from the Headmaster, boys should have a style that does not touch the collar and is not extreme in style. It should not have steps/lines and should be graded from the top into the sides.

Hopefully, all Year 8 pupils received their end of Michaelmas Term School report over the Christmas break. Tutors have been working with pupils to set their new targets for this term. Year 8 have a Parents' evening later this term and therefore Years 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 have an end of term report, as their Parents' Evenings were held last term. Please remember to feel comfortable contacting your child's tutor or the Lower School Secretary, Mrs Leonard, to clarify any concerns as we work through this new term.

You may notice that we have been trying to continue to help the environment in Lower School. We have reduced the use of plastic considerably. We have stepped up paper waste recycling. We have recently planted over 300 saplings to form a hedge along the hill between the playground and the tennis centre. This will be a valuable space for wildlife habitats and will also go some way to replace any trees lost due to age or disease around the College site. We will continue to help the environment in as many ways that we can.

We hope that the sports teams play well this weekend. Please feel welcome to go along to support!

Have a good weekend.

Yours sincerely,