

Dear Parents

Term one is finished and most of us will breathe a sign of relief. I think the first term is always the hardest for the College. There are many reasons for this and it is hard to know which is the most significant.

- A) Teachers get new sets and so the boys need to get to know the teacher and visa versa. This can be quite tough especially as most teachers prefer to start off strict and then lighten up as time passes (the other way around is nigh impossible).
- B) The first term is quite far from exams and so many boys are not as focused academically as they are in the other terms. This can result in some frustration from all sides, including parents. Boys tend to use their free time more to play on their computers and generally have fun.
- C) The term is full of interhouse summer sports events and these include a fair number of tours, with Athletics taking up a fair amount of time and energy early on. In addition the top rugby and hockey players start their training early. On top of this a number of boys are involved in the school play.
- D) The temperature is the highest of all four terms and this causes people to be irritable and lethargic. [When I first came here from teaching at Falcon in Zimbabwe (which is just off the escarpment and so very hot) I found teaching at Bishops far easier, despite the less rigid discipline, because the boys were so much more focused and cheerful. You need rigid discipline at 40 C day after day! We are soft here and boys complain as soon as it is over 30 C. "Sir, isn't there a rule that if the temperature gets over 35 then school is closed?". Sadly, no!]
- E) For about 150 boys Bishops is a brand new experience and far more hectic and complex than Prep school. In addition they are not "mothered" (excuse the expression) as much by staff and have to rise to the challenge of being organized and self-disciplined. They manage this to varying degrees and it can be quite scary for parents if their son is one of the more disorganized boys.

Next term on 8<sup>th</sup> May we are having a combined meeting of all the Parent Committee representatives from the eight Houses to look at the issues around alcohol and our children. Alcohol use is on the increase and the age at which boys are starting to drink regularly seems to be declining. This is happening at a time when more and more scientific data is pointing to the problems of alcohol consumption at a young age in terms of both short and long term dangers. I cannot predict what the outcome of the meeting will be in terms of strategies etc but we will communicate with you all at some stage after the event.

Yours sincerely

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(Deputy Headmaster Pastoral)