

Dear parents,

Many parents will have seen the recent Cambridge Evening News article crediting Sancton Wood with 20<sup>th</sup> place in a Sunday Times national 'Parent Power' list. Like me, many of you will also have bought the Sunday paper only to find no trace of the school in any of its four lists. The answer to this riddle lay in the Sunday Times on-line site which printed rankings not in the main paper. We featured in a national list of the top independent schools with no sixth form - SWS came 20<sup>th</sup> overall; with most of those schools being girls only. Of the co-eds, SWS came 7<sup>th</sup>. Pretty good, I'd say- an interesting and impressive statistic.

Our recent Open Morning was an outstanding success. Last year's total number of visiting families was 32 and this year we had over 50. I was delighted by the interest shown in our school. One of our aims for the year is to broadcast Sancton Wood to the wider Cambridge community, the exciting feel of Open Day was a definite indication that we are heading in the right direction.

The Advisory Board met at the start of the month. We welcomed a new member, Annette Armitage (mother of Jonathan in year 4) and discussed a couple of crucial issues facing the school. Firstly, was discussion regarding the use of the JSC next year. There was keen interest from our parent reps on this and all agreed that this is an issue which will warrant further thought. This will be an item on the agenda at the next meeting.

We also discussed our admissions policy and procedures. Whilst I remain categorically against the re-introduction of entrance exams, I do recognise that the admissions procedure is a symbolic and important one. It is important to be clear on what we can and can't offer to students. It is also important to keep a balanced range of abilities within the school. A 'knock-on' of this discussion was the matter of Special Educational Needs and how we can continue to offer support in this area. Daniel Sturdy will prepare a paper on this for a future meeting, outlining the plans or otherwise of SEN at the school, what is the manageable spectrum and what are the resourcing implications, if any. As ever, our parent reps can be contacted direct if you have strong feelings on any issues arising from the Advisory Boards meetings at [parentreps@sanctonwood.co.uk](mailto:parentreps@sanctonwood.co.uk).

This brings me onto the new mailing system. We will shortly be launching a new communication system - SchoolPost - designed to help improve the flow of information between the school and home. You will continue to receive information from us by email, but the new system will also give you access to a secure online 'mailbox' where you will always be able to refer back to all your school messages and documents in one place. It will also include online reply and consent forms, making it easier for you to respond as well as saving the school administration time, and an emergency texting facility. Longer-term the same system will be used to securely publish documents such as reports and exam results online.

You will not need to do anything to register for the new system as parents' accounts will be created automatically from the information we already hold. The first message you receive from the system will explain how to retrieve and update your password, and all subsequent messages will contain links to your online 'mailbox' and (where appropriate) directly to online reply forms.

The same system has been in use at a number of other local independent schools for some years and feedback from parents has been extremely positive, so we are sure that you will find it easy to use and a great help in managing the on-going communication between us. Please let us know if you have any questions or comments - otherwise please just look out for the 'new look' email messages in the school colours coming soon!

I have a new acronym for you all – SWAG or Sancton Wood Allotment Garden. A garden designer was in last week with some really exciting plans for the gate area, main playground, borders and fences. It will take time and may be done in stages but it will look terrific once completed. I promise to share all detailed plans with any parents who are interested. Not unconnected to this comes two reminders regarding SWPA.

Firstly, a reminder of SWPA's excellent idea for easy fundraising. If we all do this, we will make a really decent amount for SWPA. This is copied from their most recent newsletter...

[www.easyfundraising.org.uk](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk)

Since we are coming up to Christmas, SWPA would like to take this opportunity to remind you of the [easyfundraising](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk) website. With no effort whatsoever, when you access your favourite online stores (John Lewis, Amazon, M&S, Boden etc – the list is huge) via the [easyfundraising](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk) site, a fixed percentage of your order will be donated to SWPA. Each retailer offers a different amount and there is absolutely no cost to you at all. Retailers also have regular special offers & discounts - that alone is a great reason to sign up!

Sancton Wood is registered and it provides you with a running total of how much has been raised – so far it is over £700 pounds which has been achieved by a small number of people. The potential to raise money is huge if more of us were to sign up.

[easyfundraising](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk) does not pass your details on to anywhere else – there are a number of people who have been using this for over 2 years now and can confirm that it is a safe and secure website to use. It such an easy way to raise funds for the school with absolutely no effort involved at all – just remembering to go through [easyfundraising](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk) is the only tricky bit!!

So please remember, for all your home shopping, please remember to check [easyfundraising](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk) to see if your retailer is listed – and happy shopping!

Finally, don't forget it is the **SWPA Christmas Fair on Saturday 26th November, starting at 2 pm.** It is our biggest SWPA fund raiser of the year, so please do come along to support them and spend your money on all the wonderful things they will have for sale. They do amazing Christmas Hampers for the raffle, it is well worth a ticket.

Warm regards,

Richard Settle

#### ADVANCED NOTICE REGARDING NO HOT LUNCHES

Please note there will be **no hot lunches** on the following dates due to the School Hall being used for:

**Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> December Juniors 'Mary Poppins'**  
**Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> December Nursery and Infant Christmas parties**  
**Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> December Juniors Christmas party**  
**Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> December Seniors Christmas party**

Please ensure that your child brings in a packed lunch on these days and special party food on the day of their party. We are sorry for any inconvenience cause.

#### PARENTS' BOOK GROUP

Next book club is Thursday 19th January at 8pm, in the Family Library. Our title for next time is *The Lemon Tree*. Here's the blurb ...

In the summer of 1967, Bashir - a young Palestinian man - knocks on the door of his childhood home in the town of Ramla in Israel, a home from which his family was driven some twenty years earlier. The door is opened by a young Jewish woman, Dalia, whose family settled in the house after fleeing persecution in Bulgaria at the end of the Second World War.

Thus begins an unlikely and difficult friendship, which bridges religious divides and lasts more than four decades. *The Lemon Tree* tells the story of this extraordinary meeting of minds and offers a much-needed human perspective on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

"At a time when peace seems remote and darkness deepens, this lucid, humane, hopeful book shines like a ray of light." *The Times*

Anyone tempted is most welcome to join us.

## MATHS CHALLENGE

Mrs Pearce-Slade has organised a whole school (differentiated) maths lesson for Friday 2nd December (am) in aid of the NSPCC. Children for Year 1 to Year 11 will be participating. All children will also have a chance to buy a biscuit or cake for 50p to support this cause.

Please send your child into school with £2 on the day, which is the 'fee' for joining in the lesson.

## END OF TERM CAROL SERVICE

The End of Term Carol Service will be held at St Paul's Church at 2 pm on Friday 16th December. You are most welcome to attend, and may take your child home at the conclusion of the service, when the pupils have returned to collect their belongings from the classrooms.

For parents unable to attend the service, picking up time is as normal, from school.

Next Head's mailing: Friday 16<sup>th</sup> December