

AUTUMN TERM 2022

Dear Parents,

The Autumn Term has begun and thoughts turn to decision making for those parents in Years 5 and 6. Year 5 parents can take time to reflect on the correct Secondary School for their child. Year 6 parents have arrived at decision time. For parents who may be very worried about the choice of Secondary School, I have the following advice:

1. 'Do the leg work'

This means try to visit as many schools as you can. If it is your first child starting Secondary School, it can be a surprising experience. The scale of Schools is impressive - many have a thousand children attending.

However, if you visit several before making a decision your child will be less daunted. Also, you will quickly get a sense of the atmosphere in each school. Your child, too, will get either a positive or negative impression of each school.

2. Consider travel times

It is right that you should want the very best for your child, and want to choose the best school. However, do think carefully about how long it will take for your son or daughter to get there each day. A journey time of an hour is not uncommon! Added up that totals ten hours each week. What could your child be doing in those ten extra hours? How tired will they be by the extra effort of travelling each day? What about short winter days and travelling in the dark?

Some children do not mind long journeys, and others find it very taxing.

3. You are in a privileged position

I was recently at a meeting with the Director of Education, in which she told the assembled headteachers that we are so fortunate to be part of Catholic Education. The government know that Catholic schools perform better than others, and respect the excellent work that goes on in our schools.

To be a practising Catholic means priority admittance to most of the best schools in the Borough.

4. Consider facts, not what your neighbour says

Some Secondary Schools have negative reputations, which are quite unfairly prolonged by gossip and mis-information. All schools have performance data, websites and Ofsted Reports. It is always better to find out from the school than from a friend, however knowledgeable he or she might appear to be.

5. Consider local education

We are blessed in West Croydon with an outstanding Infant School, a great Junior School, and a very good High School. If you live locally, listen to the recommendations of your Parish Priest. He will know the schools in his parish very well (most Parish Priests are School Governors) and he will be honest and accurate. We are truly a community if we worship, live and learn together.

I hope that these pointers help you all to come to good decisions.

Finally, I would like to thank all parents for the way that you have prepared the children for the new term. We have a school full of well-motivated, polite and beautifully dressed young people. It is a pleasure to meet them every morning at the school gate.

