

New Parents' Booklet

for Parents joining
Tower House Senior School



Main School Tel: 020 8876 3323
Sports Line Tel: 020 8392 4846
Email: secretary@thsboys.org.uk
Website: www.ths.boys.org.uk

Welcome!

This is your school and we hope that you enjoy being part of the Tower House community. Please never hesitate to ask for any information that you need.

This booklet is designed to help you through your first year at Tower House. We hope that we have covered everything and are always very grateful to parents if they point out things that could usefully be added in the future.

Dropping off and collection times

Senior School parents use the entrance on Sheen Lane. Please make sure that you do not park on the yellow zigzag lines or across someone's driveway.

The gate opens at 8.20 and will close again at 8.40. Boys should be in school by 8.40 in order to line up and go to their classroom for registration.

The school day finishes at 3.55 pm but boys may be doing a club which finishes later.

After School Care

After school care runs from 4.00 until 5.00pm. Parents are charged a small fee for this facility which is added to the school bill.

Clubs and Ensembles

There are a variety of clubs which run during the week which may vary on a termly basis. These are available for all boys. Currently they include a swing band, orchestra, guitar ensemble and choir for musical boys as well as fencing, art club, squash, chess and ICT. Boys are asked to sign up for clubs during the first week of term or see the member of staff concerned. Clubs sometimes run at 8.15 am or from 4.00 to either 4.45 or 5.00 pm.



Group Parent Meetings

Parents will be invited to a Senior School Group Parent Meeting during the first full week of term. This will be clearly indicated in the school calendar. Parents start by going to their son's classroom to meet their form tutor and then drinks will be served in the hall when there will be an opportunity to meet all the teachers.

House system

When your son starts at Tower House he will be allocated to one of the four houses—Scott, Nelson, Newton and Shackleton. Throughout the year the boys are able to earn themselves house points, which contribute to a whole school house system. Points are awarded for effort, hard work and any other positive achievement for the individual child. At the end of each term, boys will be awarded a coloured badge in relation to how many house points they have earned during the term. Minus house points are occasionally awarded for poor behaviour. If a boy receives three minus house points in one half term, he will receive an after school detention.

Sport

Games

On Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday afternoons there are games sessions for the Senior School boys. Years 4 and 5 have their games session on Tuesdays and Fridays. Years 6, 7 and 8 have theirs on Mondays and Wednesdays. They change at school and are taken to the Bank of England (please see below) for the whole of the afternoon for their Games sessions. On the afternoons when your son has games, please collect him from the Bank of England rather than from Tower House. These sessions are taken by the Senior School Games staff and a number of skills are practised which are linked to the school's PE and Games curriculum i.e. Football in the Autumn Term, Rugby in the Spring and Cricket in the summer. Boys are also taught athletic skills in the summer in preparation for the Senior School Sports Day and there are various cross country events. (see below). Boys also receive PE lessons and these start before the school day at the Bank of England. During PE the following sports are practised: hockey, basket ball, squash, gymnastics, cross country, athletics and tennis. The boys should be dropped off at the Bank of England at 8.30 am and they will be coached back to school afterwards in time for Period 2 at 9.25 am. Days for each year are as follows:

- Monday: Year 4
- Tuesday: Year 6
- Wednesday: Year 5
- Thursday: Year 8
- Friday: Year 7



School matches are arranged for all of the boys in all three of the major sports. We pride ourselves on the fact that all of the boys will be in a sports team and participate in these matches. You will receive a team sheet with arrangements including venue, pick up time (it may be different to the usual routine especially if it is an away match) and opposition. Parents are very welcome to come to all matches, we love as much support as possible. After matches all boys are expected to stay for 'tea' and participate in the hosting or socialising with their opposition before going home.

Charity Events

In recent times these have included The National Autistic Society, Guide Dogs for the Blind, Cystic Fibrosis Trust and British Heart Foundation. Each class in the Senior School fundraises annually for one or more charities of its choice. The Year 8 boys undertake many charitable events as part of their Programme of Community Projects and also undertake personal challenges within 'The Dan Phillips Award' scheme.



FOTH

This stands for 'Friends of Tower House'. They are the wonderful group of parents who put on social events for parents and staff, fund raise and help staff on school trips and so forth. Any parent can volunteer to be a class representative. This is another good communication route between parents and school. However, management and educational issues are not on the agenda for this group.

School Trips and Visits



The Bank of England Sports Club

This is often referred to as the Bank of England or the 'B of E'. Very confusing as it is not a bank but a sports club which Tower House are lucky enough to be able to use all through the year. We use the swimming pool, sports hall, squash courts, cricket nets, tennis courts and all pitches. It is very close to the school, near Roehampton Gate of Richmond Park. The actual address is:-

*Bank of England Sports Centre
Bank Lane
Off Priory Lane
Roehampton
London SW15 5JQ
Tel: 020 8878 8454*

Classes regularly go on school trips to support the curriculum. Typical day visits include Hampton Court Palace, The Museum of London, The Royal Observatory in Greenwich and both The Polka and Richmond Theatres. Each year group undertakes a residential outing in either the Spring or Summer terms. Year 4—Flatford Mill Environmental Centre in Suffolk, Year 5—York (Historical focus), Year 6— France (language skills), Year 7— Dartmoor (Geographical fieldwork), Year 8— Skern Lodge (Outdoor Education Centre) Devon. There is also an annual ski trip in the Easter holidays which is open to all boys in the Senior School.

Sports Day

This takes place in the middle of the summer term. All Senior School boys are involved in a medley of activities which use the skills that the boys have practiced throughout the summer term. Points are scored and boys represent their house. Parents come along to this event (usually held at Barn Elms Sports Ground, Barnes) and stay on for a picnic lunch afterwards. The date will be in the blue calendar.





Communication

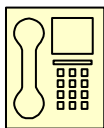
There are many ways in which we keep the communication channels open for parents. Parents can ask to see a member of staff before or after the school day by either one of the following routes:-

Speak to or email a member of staff directly.

Phone/email Mrs Booth (the school secretary) and ask her to arrange an appointment at a mutually convenient time.

Intranet

Towards the beginning of your son's first term you will receive a username and password which you will be able to use to connect to the intranet. This is the same username and password that you will be able to use to download the weekly newsletters (see below). The School Intranet Home Page is displayed on a screen in the entrance hall where important information is also displayed. Parents are encouraged to access the intranet to find out all sorts of other information and activities going on in school.



EAL (English as an Additional Language).

If a boy speaks another language at home and English is his second language, extra lessons are available if needed from a visiting EAL specialist. These are paid for by parents.

First Aid

We have several First Aiders in the school. Only the simplest of first aid may be given in school. Anything requiring greater intervention will mean contacting you as a parent and moving on from there. A parent will always be called if there is a head injury, however mild.

Special Events

Christmas

A Carol service takes place at Christchurch on the final evening of the Autumn term to celebrate Christmas.



Speech Day

This is an event that takes place during the last week of the summer term – usually in Christchurch, East Sheen. It is a celebration of the year just completed, starting with a musical concert and then the presentation of prizes. Parents are welcome. The boys sit separately from the parents at the front of the church. The actual date will be in the blue calendar.

Music Lessons

Music is part of the curriculum. Boys also have the opportunity to learn a range of instruments at Tower House. These include piano, violin, cello, clarinet, guitar, saxophone, singing, flute, drums and percussion. They are able to join the Senior Choir and the ensembles listed on Page 2. Boys learning instruments are encouraged to perform in Assemblies, Open Days and Speech Days. An application form for Music lessons can be obtained from Mrs Booth or downloaded from the Intranet.



Drama Lessons

Drama is also taught on a peripatetic basis in the same way as individual music lessons and lessons are arranged directly with the Drama teacher. A school production takes place in the Spring term and a prose and poetry competition in the Autumn term. There is also a drama club for which there is a small fee.



Weekly newsletter

This is written almost every week and contains the news of the week as well as reminding parents about certain events coming up. However it is not a secondary calendar and parents need to keep their eye on the blue calendar. The Newsletter is sent electronically to all parents apart from the few who do not have email and they receive a hard copy in their son's bag. Please keep Mrs Booth informed of any change in address, telephone number or email address.

Absence and Sickness

If your son is ill, please ring the Main School number and leave a message on the answer phone. If your son has to be absent from school and you are aware of this in advance, please complete an authorised absence form. This has to be signed by the Head and it is available from the school office or can be downloaded from the intranet. We obviously do not encourage term time absences.

Appointments with the Head

These can be made by contacting Mrs Booth who will make an appointment with you at a mutually convenient time.

Parent Discussion Forums

These take place during the year. The Head and Deputy Head host a simple, informal hour from 6.00pm – 7.00pm for the parents of a year group. We have a glass of wine and sit and chat about the school, any problems that you may have encountered, the things that you have particularly enjoyed, any ideas that you may have for improvement and so forth. This is not a forum for talking about individual children but a 'get together' to share experiences.

Parents' Evenings

The Senior School Parents' Evenings take place in the Autumn and Spring Term. Year 5 and 6 have their parent evening in the Autumn Term and Year 4, 7 and 8 have theirs in the Spring term. The date of the evening will be published in the blue school calendar. A letter will be sent via email to you asking for your preferred time a few weeks before the date of the parent evening. It operates on a first come first served basis and the appointments will either start at 5.00 or 6.00 pm. A schedule of appointments will then be sent to you a week before the date. The appointment with each teacher lasts for 5 minutes and there will be an opportunity to see all the members of staff that teach your son. If there are extra concerns or more time is needed, then another appointment can be made for later in the week.

Reports

Reports are written on the boys in the Autumn term for boys whose parents have not had a Parent/Teacher evening i.e. Years 4, 7 and 8 and in the Spring term for Years 5 and 6. All boys have a report in the summer term.

Assessments

The following assessments and examinations are taken in the Senior School:

NVR/spelling/reading tests	Years 4-7-Summer Term
Cognitive Abilities Tests:	Years 4 and 5-Spring Term
End of Year examinations	All Senior School-Summer Term
Practice Mock Common Entrance	Year 8–Autumn Term
Mock Common Entrance	Year 8-Spring Term
Common Entrance	Year 8-Summer Term



Homework

Homework is an important part of the education process in schools and it is taken seriously at Tower House. As the boys get older, the amount of time spent on homework increases.

Below is the homework timetable for 2009-2010 which will be similar for future years.

Year Group	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Year 4	RS	Science	Geography and French	History	Maths and English
Year 5	RS and Geography	French and Maths	Science	English	History and Maths
Year 6	Maths and RS	Science and Latin	English	French and Geography	Maths and History
Year 7	English	French and Latin	Geography and Maths	RS and Science	Maths and History
Year 8	French and English	Maths and Latin	RS and Geography	Maths and Science	History, Latin and French

Reading

Reading is paramount in all curriculum areas. There are opportunities for boys to enrich and improve their independent reading, aided by reading aloud in class. Each year group is assigned a class reader in English which changes every term allowing boys to discuss, interpret and analyse texts. This develops skills in critical thinking, something which is crucial in all subjects.

The Library

The library is a vibrant place which the boys are encouraged to use in lesson time and breaks. Volunteer parents man the library at lunch times and boys may go in to change their books or read quietly. New titles are bought in regularly to encourage the boys to read.