

Speech and Drama 2017-2018

Dear Parents,

We are delighted that your son will be continuing with Speech and Drama lessons in the next academic year. Miss Portsmouth will be responsible for the running of the department with the day-to-day teaching being undertaken by our new S&D teacher, Mrs Bell. Mrs Keane will continue teaching part-time next year.

We are writing to communicate some important changes to Speech and Drama for next year which I will outline below. The reasons for these changes are, firstly that we would like our staff to be utilised in the best possible way; more importantly that your son receives the best tuition, making good use of his full 35-minute lesson.

The most important change will be the allocation of fixed slot lessons. Speech and Drama is becoming ever more popular, with parents and boys alike seeing the great benefits that these lessons bring in terms of confidence, public speaking and all-round communication skills. With a large number of boys opting for lessons (over a third of the prep school), we must ensure that time is being distributed fairly and sensibly. This means we cannot continue to offer as many fixed lesson times as we currently do and the vast majority of boys will need to be put into the rotating lesson system we have in place currently. For the fixed slots, we would like to give priority to Year 7 and Year 8 boys, due to the increasing demand on their academic studies and assessments, especially those who have a number of other commitments. The remainder of the boys will be in the rotating system.

The rotating system:

- In this system, boys should not miss more than 1-2 lessons of the same subject per half term (and should speak with Miss Portsmouth or their Speech and Drama teacher if they do).
- It has proved hard for boys in Year 3 and Year 4 to keep to fixed slots during lunch times and slots during lessons will, therefore, be better for them.
- Year 3 and 4 lessons will rotate around 2 afternoons (discussed with their main teacher who will choose a time which impacts least on their academics) and they will not miss Maths or English lessons.
- All tutors will have a whiteboard displaying S&D lesson times which will be updated weekly to help boys organise and be reminded each morning.
- These rotations require boys to stay organised in order to know and take responsibility for their schedules; this is a very important skill to acquire at an early age.

As we explained, boys in Year 7 and 8 will be given priority for fixed slots due to the increasing demand on their academic studies and assessments. These slots are still limited, so if you would like your son to be considered for a fixed slot next year, please email Miss Portsmouth with your reasons. Boys in younger years may still be considered for a fixed slot in very exceptional circumstances, however, this is not guaranteed and they will only be considered for a slot if availability allows.

I understand that this may impact your decision to continue with Speech and Drama lessons – the deadline for giving notice for next term has therefore been extended to 10th July as opposed to the usual end of term. I must conclude by saying that if we felt rotating lessons would be in any way detrimental to a boy's long-term learning, we would not offer them as an option. I hope you understand our reasoning.

We are looking forward to teaching the boys next year. Wishing you a wonderful Summer!j

Kind regards,

Miss Sarah Portsmouth, Mrs Eleanor Bell, Mrs Sue Keane