“beneath the rule of men entirely great, the pen is mightier than the sword”

Edward Bulwer Lytton

Dear Parents,

Each week countless people are killed by extremists in various wars, attacks, terrorist bombs. These terrorists do not discriminate between men, women, children, refugees; like most terrorists they are more adept at killing their own ‘tribe’ than their declared enemies. Not being one of them is to cause them offence. We are very fortunate to live without such fear and we often take this for granted.

Thus the 12 murders this Wednesday in Paris are, in one sense, statistically insignificant in comparison to the atrocities perpetrated daily around the world. However, the attack in Paris is a much deeper one than this. It is an attack on the European way of life and on our culture.

The satirical magazine, Charlie Hebdo, is not a publication that I know, and from my brief review of its cartoons online it is probably not a publication I would subscribe to. Its humour is quite scathing, and certainly gives rise to offence at times. However in France they take their satire quite seriously and the battles for freedom of the press were fought in past centuries and won; the French have a greater tolerance for publications that may be interpreted as blasphemous and/or indecent in comparison to the press laws in my home country, Ireland. However, as the Daily Mail writes: “If liberty is to mean anything, it must include the freedom to mock, offend or question the beliefs of others, within the limits of democratically decided law.

This attack is one to strike fear, to impose censorship, and to create barriers to free speech and to free thought. Our greatest challenge and responsibility as a school is to teach pupils to question, to analyse but most of all to think for themselves. The greatest discoveries have been where brave, fearless thinkers have challenged the orthodoxy. The work of Copernicus changed how we view the world but was seen as a very dangerous heresy when first published. The work of Darwin and Freud was equally controversial but it has led to so much other discovery.

Our thoughts and condolences are with our friends in France and I have offered our sympathies to the director of the French Lycee. Let this dark day for Europe be one that awakens us to reassert those values that we all too often take for granted, life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

Tom McGrath, Headmaster

WHOLE SCHOOL NOTICES

MEDICAL
The First Aid office would like to inform you that the following symptoms are going around school: Acute abdominal pain and headaches without a fever.

UNIFORM
On Monday from 3:00pm onwards, all uniform items from the lost property box will be on display on the round seating area near the Front office for parents to collect. Uncollected items of clothing will be donated to a local charity.

COMMUNITY CHOIR
The Community Choir will start again next Thursday 15th January between 16:10-17:00 in the Music Room. All welcome! What better way to relax at the end of a busy day? Group singing is cheaper than therapy, healthier than drinking, and certainly more fun than working out!
PRIMARY NOTICES
HEAD OF PRIMARY COMMENDATION AWARD

This commendation is for significant progress in his reading and an outstanding attitude towards his learning.

ANDRÉ CHEN - 5L

READING BOX

Reading box with Mrs Torcato will be before school on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8:25-8:55 (Primary Library) and after school on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 3:30 to 4:10 in the Learning support office. All Primary pupils can attend, please email Mrs Torcato: emma.torcato@obs.edu.pt Those attending from last term do not need to reply.

PRIMARY DATES FOR THE DIARY

There will be a whole school Book Fair in the Secondary Library on 04th February. Primary “Carnaval” Celebrations will take place on Thursday, 12th February.

PRIMARY TALENT SHOW

- Primary Talent Show auditions 28 & 29 January
- Primary Talent Show 12th February

Mark Evans, Head of Primary
SECONDARY NOTICES

NOTICES
All key secondary notices are found at http://www.obs.edu.pt/page.cfm?p=428 Please do check this on a regular basis.

SECONDARY NEWSLETTER
The Winter edition of the OBServer is available at http://www.obs.edu.pt/. Please do read this if you have not done so already.

FORM 10 &12 REPORTS AND PARENTS EVENING
Grade reports should be with parents on the 19th January and you are able to discuss these and other matters on the 21st January (5.30-7.30pm). This is a very important parents evening to ensure each child is on track to achieve the best results they are capable of.

LITERACY DRIVE
As stated in the OBSever, this term we are focusing on literacy. At home, all pupils must read an English book for at least 30 minutes every night. All pupils are also part of the accelerated reader programme which has proven to raise literacy levels. All parents can monitor this using their log in. We are also, encouraging all pupils to speak English in all lessons that are in English. Pupils that currently have a reading age below their chronological age are invited to reading box in the Secondary Library before school. Any other pupil who would like to participate in this should contact lee.hann@obs.edu.pt or emm.torcato@obs.edu.pt.

IGCSE AND IBDP OPTIONS:
Form 8 will receive some information related to the IGCSE programme this half term. There will also be a parent’s information evening with the parent-teacher meetings on the 4th March. Information and handbooks can be found at http://www.obs.edu.pt/page.cfm?p=7.
Form 10 pupils and parents will be invited to an IBDP information evening on the 29th January.
In addition, Miss Macleod (IBDP) and Miss Corcoran (IGCSE) can be contacted in relation to any initial queries.

EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES
Provision has further improved this year especially during lunch times. Schedules can be found at http://www.obs.edu.pt/page.cfm?p=422
Rui Mathias (9W) will be participating in the 2nd round of this year’s Portuguese Mathematics Olympiad. This will take place on 14th January 2015 at 3.30pm at the Externato Ribadouro. We wish Rui all the BEST!

UNIFORM
We are discussing the situation of girls’ skirts with the Student Council and the Uniform Shop and will feedback to parents and pupils as soon as we can on this matter.

Peter Jones, Head of Secondary
## Dates for the Diary

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event details</th>
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<tr>
<td>6th-13th January</td>
<td>Mock 10-12 Examinations</td>
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<td>12th January</td>
<td>Extra Curricular Clubs start back</td>
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<td>12th January</td>
<td>Casa da Música Trip for Prep and Reception children</td>
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<td>21st January</td>
<td>Parents Evening for F10 and F12</td>
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<td>26th January</td>
<td>F10 Geography Trip</td>
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<td>26th January</td>
<td>F5 Benjamin Sports Festival at CLIP</td>
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<td>29th January</td>
<td>IB Open Evening</td>
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<td>04th February</td>
<td>Whole School book fair</td>
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<td>12th February</td>
<td>Primary Talent Show</td>
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<tr>
<td>13th February</td>
<td>NO SCHOOL - INSET day for Staff</td>
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