

Stonyhurst, St Mary's Hall
Clitheroe
Lancashire
BB7 9PU

22nd September

Dear Parents,



Our first weekend spent at home here at St Mary's Hall has gone by in a blur. No trips bowling, no climbing hills – and yet we're all pleasantly tired, and looking forward to a good night's sleep. We've had a great Blandyke Day, with Father Howell celebrating a special Boarders' Mass in the St Mary's Hall chapel, and Miss Allen playing the music for us; followed by a treasure trail in the afternoon, and visits from many family members.

The new routines throughout the week are going well – Mr Satterthwaite is conducting Music Practises on Tuesday and Thursday evenings with great enthusiasm, and the children seem to have been swept along with his joyous approach to his subject. Many are even asking if they can practise on other nights as well!

This week we also introduced our gap support groups, where each child belongs to a small pastoral group where they can really get to know their gap tutor well, and, hopefully, feel comfortable asking for help and support with just about anything. The gaps took them off on Sunday morning to walk by the ponds, play games, chat and read in the glorious sunshine we were lucky enough to be able to enjoy.



Our SMH Head Boy, William Atkins, who is also a boarder, travelled down to London on Thursday, as part of the team presenting a slice of what boarding life at St Mary's is really like, to prospective parents at Westminster Hall. He, together with

Head Girl Emily Smith, spoke beautifully, and with real pride and enthusiasm about his experiences of boarding here. It made us all feel very proud to be part of a team that enables such confidence and achievement to be developed in people of so young an age.



At our Boarding Meeting on Saturday afternoon we discussed many of the children's concerns. One of the main things to worry them is the thorny issue of tuck. Some children have been hiding this and eating it at night, and we discussed the reasons, as a group why this might not be a good idea. The children came up with the following suggestions: Some tuck might contain nuts, which would be dangerous for children with allergies; eating after cleaning your teeth causes tooth decay; sugar makes you very energetic and more likely to get into trouble for making too much noise or madly running around; it's not fair that some children have tuck and others don't . . .



the list went on. Eventually we all agreed that tuck should be handed in and returned to the children at exeat, or it would be confiscated if found, but it is soooo tempting when it arrives in parcels – so please, mums and dads and aunts and uncles – don't send tuck!

On this healthy eating theme, everyone agreed to at least try to eat some green vegetables at our family Sunday lunch – though, as you can see, this was rather a challenge for some of us!



The idea of a Blandyke as a special celebration for Stonyhurst boarders has been with us for over four hundred years since the days when the school was at St Omers; and today was really special, with visits from brothers, sisters, cousins, close family friends, and even a Nanny and Grandad joining us for lunch. We split into teams for the afternoon treasure trail, and there were two winning groups, one which had collected the most amount of treasure, and the other which solved the cryptic clue collection of hidden numbers to spell out the

word "siblings".

This comes to you as, tired but happy, your children are sleeping quietly in their dormitories. We hope that you have also had a happy weekend, and wish you a good week to come.

With best wishes to you all,

Ruth Hughes
Director of Boarding

