

November 2010

Dear Year Nine Parents

### **French Email Project**

I am writing to inform you of an email project that the French Department is establishing for all pupils Year 9 this year. Each pupil would be paired up with a boy or girl of a similar age in one of two French partner schools, and therefore have the opportunity and the challenge of using the French that he or she has learnt in class in an authentic situation.

The two schools in France are both well-considered private schools of which I have personal experience. The first is the Institution Sainte-Marie in Antony, near Paris. This is our new partner school with whom we intend to run a Year 10 exchange from 2010-2011. I visited the school in May of last year. The second school is the Collège Thérèse d'Avila in Lille, with whom I ran an exchange at my previous school.

We are aware that you may have concerns regarding your son or daughter's use of information technology and contact with relatively 'unknown' correspondents. With this in mind, my colleague and I have constructed the email exchange so as to ensure the safety of all concerned. Firstly, the project will be school-based, that is to say all formal contact would be made in French classes, during lessons set aside for this purpose. Secondly, all correspondence will be through school email accounts which the school can, should the need arise, monitor using our existing Securus software. In addition, we will stress to pupils that they should under no circumstances communicate a telephone number, home address or any other means by which they might be contacted other than email. I would add however that previous experience has shown that some pupils enjoy exchanging more informal email correspondence with their partner, during free time and using a personal (i.e. not school) email address.

Although we appreciate that there are some dangers to such communication, on the whole we feel it to be the sort of spontaneous, voluntary linguistic and cultural exchange that we are hoping to inspire in pupils. As such, we are happy to allow such contact, and would simply ask you as parents to make it clear to your son or daughter if you do not wish them to communicate a personal email address to their French partner.

If, having considered the above, you **do not** wish your son or daughter to participate in this project would you please contact me by telephone, post or email. If I do not hear from you **by Friday 3 December**, I will presume that you are happy for your child to take part.

Yours sincerely

**Paul Gamble**  
**Head of French**