

from THE HEADMASTER

TO ALL PARENTS OF BOYS IN ST OSWALD'S HOUSE

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Dear Parents

This letter accompanies that of Fr Abbot about the retirement in a year's time of Fr Chad from his housemastership of St Oswald's.

I want first, like the Abbot, to acknowledge that such news often brings sadness and disappointment. Many of you I know will have chosen St Oswald's because of Fr Chad and I am sure that he will be missed. Still my experience as Headmaster over the past six years is that such changes, which as we all know happen in life, can be managed well and happily in a well run boarding house with a strong identity.

I am intending to appoint Patrick McBeth as resident Assistant Housemaster from this September, thus replacing Ryan Day, who is of course leaving to pursue a vocation to the priesthood in our diocese of Middlesbrough and to whom I am very grateful for all he has done this year. Patrick McBeth will then take over as Housemaster of St Oswald's in September 2011, when Fr Chad steps down.

Patrick has been a teacher of Music and Head of Keyboard here since 2005 and has been a resident assistant housemaster throughout this time, first in St Bede's and latterly in St Thomas'. Patrick holds a first class honours degree in Music and has secured several diplomas and further qualifications. Before coming to Ampleforth, he performed widely in the USA and Europe, as well as in the UK. He is a Catholic and married to Frances. He has been very successful here in all these roles, but of particular importance is his distinguished service in St Thomas' which has prepared him well for this new responsibility. There will of course be opportunities in the coming year for you to meet Patrick and Frances.

Over the past six years we have spent over £500,000 on the improvement of facilities and refurbishment in St Oswald's and St Dunstan's (the Nevill House building). In the light of this present decision, we are making further plans. We now intend to build four-bedroomed housemaster accommodation for both houses, to be ready in time for September 2011. These houses will be connected to the existing building at ground and first floor level. We are at the same time making a longer term plan to ensure that the two boarding houses are brought further into line with all the houses in terms of facilities and accommodation.

These building plans are needful, but both the Abbot and I are very mindful that we must make a good appointment of a Chaplain for St Oswald's, once Patrick McBeth begins his housemastership. Appointment to this important post, which reflects a key aspect of the continuing monastic influence in the school, will be made and communicated to you in due course.

With prayers and best wishes,

Yours sincerely

Fr Gabriel Everitt OSB, MA, DPhil