



BROCKHURST *Boys* & MARLSTON HOUSE *Girls* PREPARATORY SCHOOLS



November 2009

DOG WALKING AROUND THE SCHOOL GROUNDS

Most parents who bring their dogs to walk them in the grounds and the countryside surrounding the school act responsibly with regard to fouling. Similarly, dogs supporting school matches are invariably on leads and behave well.

However, there have been incidents reported to the school where **dogs have been allowed off leads when their owners are exercising them in the countryside beyond the school premises.**

This is causing significant problems to the gamekeepers on the two estates that adjoin the school grounds.

The reason that the attractive – uplifting even - mix of woodland, hedgerow and field margin is retained rather than being turned over to intensive arable farming is precisely because the land is leased for game shooting and is managed by the estates' gamekeepers. However, just one dog running loose through a wood or hunting through a patch of maize grown as cover can cause the game to disperse far and wide.

In addition, there have been complaints from gamekeepers that Brockhurst and Marlston House walkers are not sticking resolutely to the **marked rights of way.**

The school depends upon maintaining good relationships with the neighbouring landowners for permission to take pupils on science and nature walks, for cross-country running away from roads, for the holding of events such as the recent Fun Run and for use of the off-road paths during hacks by school riding groups.

We therefore ask dog owners and other walkers (and indeed runners) therefore to:

- ❖ Keep dogs on leads whenever walking in the countryside around the school
- ❖ Stay entirely on marked rights of way
- ❖ Ask Mr Fleming or Mr Park for advice if there is uncertainty about the rights of way – we can even lend you a map!