



Aldenham

founded 1597

December 2007

Dear Parents,

As we come to the end of an incredibly busy and demanding term, it is only right that we should pause and reflect on what has been achieved by your sons and daughters, and the staff over the last four months.

There have been many significant achievements from pupils in all year groups, but certain events in the school term stand out in my mind as being especially important to indicate the health of the school. The school of which your children are part is now of course larger in terms of sheer numbers than at any time in the past, but we still maintain the values of a small and caring community and are able to enact them on a daily basis. From the first day of term the fact that we now have over 520 pupils in the Senior School became very evident with the fullness of the chapel each time we gather there. With the arrival of the first pupils who have been all the way through our Prep School we are now truly a whole Aldenham foundation for the first time and our links with the Prep School have been growing in importance this term.

The reality of now having over 75 girls as part of the Senior School has meant that we have been able to open up to them a far wider range of sporting activities and a particular date to treasure was the appearance of the first Aldenham School Girls Hockey XI in a fixture against Haileybury. The boys' sports teams also enjoyed a good term with outstanding seasons for the First and Second Soccer XIs and good performances at many junior levels. We have developed good fixture lists for fives and netball at all levels and many more children have represented the school for the first time. However the best sporting achievement of the term was the work of our Golf team: Will Kirby, James Memory, and Matthew Wallace took part in the ISGA National Tournament against 16 other schools in November and not only did they win the team net competition, but Matthew Wallace won the individual competition with a new course record score of 71.

Of course this was the term when the new school week came into being and there has been almost universal approval of the two key changes: the prompter start to the school day and the enhanced lesson length of 45 minutes. Pupils and teachers are responding extremely well to the changes and making very good use of their time in the classroom. Saturdays have continued to be a very important day in the life of the school with not only a whole range of sporting fixtures taking place, but also a host of other activities inside and outside the school being run for the pupils' benefit, as well as a project to benefit disadvantaged youngsters from Borehamwood. Next term some of these Saturday sessions will be used specifically to aid our Y11 and Y13 pupils with a heavy coursework burden to complete their work or take part in revision sessions and I would ask you to note these dates in your diary if you have a son or daughter in these year groups.

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May I also remind all parents that on their return to school immediately after the Christmas holidays all pupils will be entering a period of assessment. There will be internal exams for pupils in Years 7-12 and some AS modules for pupils in Year 13. This half year programme of assessment is ideal for checking progress and setting targets for the remainder of the year. I would ask you to remind your sons and daughters of this fact as soon as the main festivities are completed and note the need for proper preparation and revision. If you would like to check the programme that the pupils will be undergoing in these tests, you are welcome to visit the parents' area of the website via the *log in* button and the identity **parents** with a password of **rplatt1597**. We are of course always interested to hear of other information which you would find it helpful to have included on that site.

It has been very good to have the chance to meet a large number of parents at our sequence of development evenings over the term and I know that it has been good for parents to meet members of our governing body at these events. I am very pleased to report that the response to the theatre appeal has been extremely good with around £250,000 raised at the time of writing. In particular the idea of sponsoring a seat in the theatre has been especially successful with over 130 of the seats already sponsored at a cost of £300. We do hope that the last 20 seats will also be sponsored to complete the project and would ask you to contact the development office if you would be able to help. The theatre itself was duly completed on schedule at the end of October and has already been fully in use since then. The first production of *The Beggar's Opera* played to full houses at the end of last month and demonstrated how pupils were able to benefit from the opportunity to work in a fully-fitted modern theatre. If this was the most spectacular technical event of the term, the most impressive in terms of scale was the House Music Competition, held in the Sports Hall for 1,000 people in October. Every pupil in the senior school performed during the evening either as a soloist, member of an ensemble, or as part of the unison choirs. When pupils are able to participate in something of such a high standard, but with such a sense of competitive pride for their house, we have the chance to see Aldenham at its very best.

Naturally whilst the end of term is a time for reflection, it is also a time for farewells to three members of staff who are all moving on to promotions in other schools. We congratulate Ms Kerri Fox who leaves us to become a Housemistress at New Hall School; she will be replaced as Head of RS by Mr Christien Bembridge. Mr Colin Hughes who has served the school extremely well not only as the Assistant Director of Music, but also as the Head of Life Skills moves with his family to Eastbourne to become Director of Music at St Bede's Prep School. The third member of staff to be leaving at the end of the term is Mr Tim Butterworth who has had a tremendous impact during his time at Aldenham as, successively, Head of History, Head of Riding's House and currently Head of Beevor's House. We wish him and his young family well as they move to Sussex, where Tim will become Head of Sixth Form at Burgess Hill School for Girls. The new housemaster of Beevor's, Mr Stuart Mainwaring will be moving in over the Christmas holiday and Mr Butterworth's replacement in the History department, who will also teach Psychology, is Mr David Bott who joins us from Haileybury College, Melbourne.

I very much hope that much of our daily excitement about the life of the school is reflected in the impressions you receive from your sons and daughters at home. It is certainly something which is always noted by visitors to the school and which helps them to understand the real character of our community. May I take this opportunity to wish you and your families a very happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

Kind regards,

Yours sincerely



James Fowler

Key Dates: Lent Term 2008

Tues 8 th Jan	Start of Term
	Internal exams begin for Years 7 to 12
Mon 28 th Jan	6.30 p.m. Year 11 Parents' Evening in Richard Platt Building & Library
Thurs 31 st Jan	7.30 p.m. 'Snark' – Middle School Production – Years 9 & 10
Fri 1 st Feb	7.30 p.m. 'Snark' – Middle School Production – Years 9 & 10
Tues 5 th Feb	6.30 p.m. Year 9 Parents' Evening in Richard Platt Building & Library
Fri 8 th Feb	Half term begins at 5.00 p.m. (until Monday 18 th Feb)
Wed 20 th Feb	6.30 p.m. Year 7 Parents' Evening in Richard Platt Building & Library
Thurs 6 th Mar	7.00 p.m. GCSE Drama Shows
Tues 11 th Mar	6.30 p.m. Year 12 Parents' Evening in Richard Platt Building & Library
Mon 17 th Mar	6.30 p.m. Year 13 Parents' Evening in Richard Platt Building & Library
Wed 19 th Mar	Spring Concert
Thurs 20 th Mar	1.00 p.m. Term Ends