

1 January 2010

Dear Parents and pupils,

Happy New Year! I hope that it will be an enjoyable and memorable one for all of you. This letter is just an update of a few things that occurred last term and a look forward to the Lent term.

As I mentioned in my end of term assembly, I was not able to recall such a long and gruelling term as the Michaelmas one. I guess, with the expected prevalence of swine flu and ever increasing pressure to work towards January examinations, it was always going to be tough. Yet, for example, 46% Aldrich absence on Friday 13th November was by far the highest level of illness that I have ever come across. Hence, although there could well be some more cold weather on the way, hopefully the shorter term and emergence into spring will help us all.

The most noteworthy House event of the term was the House Song debacle; joint last (10th=) after winning it last year. Nonetheless, we had three good excuses with numerous pupils being absent ill, not being able to have one single practice in the Great Hall and then not having a microphone working on one side of the stage (some say this was sabotage by another House). However, in true Aldrich fashion we will give a rendition of it at the 'At Home' in April and we will bounce back next year (at least we weren't booed off the stage).

Otherwise, our leaving Upper Sixth gained the best A-Level results (30As and 3Bs) for the second year in succession and the current U6th have probably completed their hardest term at the college having submitted their UCAS applications on top of all the other usual demands. We had an enjoyable House Dinner in September and our 24 new 4th form, L6th and tutors have all integrated extremely well into House life. The vast majority of pupils were exhaustingly committed to Rugby, Music and other extra-curricular activities and I applaud all those who, sometimes thanklessly, have given so much of their spare time to the college. Nonetheless, I'm sure many good memories and friendships have been forged through these worthwhile involvements and I urge everyone to keep making use of the many enriching things that are available to do at the college. And within the House environment, the new table Tennis Table has been a real boon and the regular internal Table Tennis and Pool competitions have kept the boys entertained. Congratulations go to Mr Hart (TT) and Ed

Kittow (Pool) for winning these events by the way! And finally, you may have noticed in the newsletters that each House awards a 'pupil of the week'. I think that this is a worthy recognition of someone in the House who has made a particular effort or impact making an exceptional effort in something and being an example to others through their positive and proactive nature.

Looking forward to the Lent term, I'd like to point out a few 'housekeeping' grumbles and significant dates. At the end of term, all the kit lockers were emptied and book lockers are all in good order. I have double checked them all and removed obvious debris. I have stored numerous items of decent kit/equipment left lying around in my spare cupboard. Hence, with a clear and clean House, could I make a timely reminder to ensure that your boys keep their belongings organised in a locker, *with a padlock*, as some items were mislaid last term. I would also like to remind the boys that it is entirely unacceptable to 'borrow' kit that they might see in a bag or open locker. If they have forgotten anything, then they should see me and I have some spare supplies. I would also like to remind all the boys to ensure that their hair is of an acceptable length on return. Apart from exams, there are fewer events on this term. Obviously Football becomes the main sport, and I'm looking forward to winning this House event, bearing in mind that we have many stars (and I always do my best to be a discreetly biased referee or linesman!). We have our final Sunday service of the year on the 24th January and there is an Open morning on Saturday 6th February.

In terms of an underlying theme for the term, there are two things that spring to mind. The first is that there is a major school inspection due; hence, obviously I'd like Aldrich to be regarded as a strong House, therefore continued general support, understanding and good humour from the boys (and parents) would be much appreciated. And secondly, being the main charity term, I'd like the boys to be as proactive as ever in supporting Breast Cancer in our two swimathon events in February and March.

Finally I'd like to welcome Miss Walker as a replacement for Mr Wiseman as the L6th tutor. Unfortunately, being an Australian, Mr Wiseman's visa will expire soon; however, he may well return in the Summer term. Miss Walker is a Biology teacher and the new Head of Cricket, after having played a high level of ladies cricket in recent times. Of course she is a most welcome addition to the House and I am sure that she'll keep fostering the House spirit (and give us a few marginal umpiring decisions over the years of course!).

Kind regards.

Graham Hart