

14th July 2016

Dear Parents/Carers

Re: Head's letter

We have almost reached the end of the summer term and how quickly it seems to have gone! There are a number of items below which I would like to bring to your attention:

Staffing changes

We have a number of staff leaving us at the end of term. Ms Robles is retiring at the end of term and we thank her for 10 years' service at Alder and wish her a happy (and restful!) retirement. Other teaching staff leaving for pastures new are Miss Talbot, Mrs Vali, Mrs Hibbert and Miss Andrews. We wish them all the best in their new schools. Also, from our support staff, Miss Hamilton (Stage 2 Assistant) is going on to train to be an Art teacher, and Mrs Fiorentino (Progress Leader) and Mrs Perry (Teaching Assistant) are moving to new jobs.

I am grateful to these staff for everything they have done for our students and wish them all the very best for the future; I will write early in September with details of all our new staff.

TES English team award

The TES (Times' Educational Supplement) Awards are now in their eighth year. These are national awards and there are 16 categories. We are part of the Tameside wide English team that won the award *English teacher or team of the year*; a magnificent achievement! We are proud to have been part of the Tameside English team that has continued to raise standards in English across Tameside. Further details can be found at www.tesawards.co.uk

Uniform and equipment reminder

Please check the uniform policy carefully (it is on our website) and if you are unsure about any item please contact the appropriate Progress Leader for advice. Be wary of so called 'back to school' sections in supermarkets which may not be compliant with our uniform policy, in particular avoiding 'skinny' pants and 'crossover shoes, made to look like trainers; shoes should look like shoes. The uniform policy is enclosed.

For Year 7 we are introducing a new black, breathable PE top which replaces the white polo shirt. Of course students in other year groups are welcome to replace the white polo shirt with the black one but this is not compulsory. The PE department has asked for any football kit still at home to be brought back into school.

From September, all students will be expected to have a red pen in addition to their existing equipment. This is to be used for student and teacher dialogue in books. All students will receive a free red pen in September but will be expected to replace it themselves thereafter.

Enrichment and Activity Days

We have moved our planned Enrichment Day from Friday, 8th July to Monday, 17th July and lessons will continue as normal with a Rio Olympics theme. I am sure it will be an engaging and positive learning experience for all students. Also, as we have problems with coaches at this time of year, we have moved our planned activities day from Monday, 18th July to Friday, 21st October. Further details will be given, in a letter, for the students to bring home before the end of this term.

Lockers

New lockers will be installed during the summer holidays as a replacement for the 'grey' lockers, and all students have been asked to empty their present locker by Friday, 15th July. The new lockers will be issued at the start of September to those who originally had a 'grey' locker.

Arrangements for the last day

On Tuesday, 19th July, the last day, we will be finishing school at 1.00pm but it will be a non-uniform day for charity. Students wishing to come in non-uniform must donate a minimum of £2.00; alternatively, students may attend in uniform. Lessons will continue in the morning as normal but please note that whilst there will be snacks available at break, there will be no lunch provided at 1.00pm when we finish.

Attendance and penalty notices

Despite the recent press coverage of the parent challenging his penalty notice in court and winning, the Government has not changed its stance and expect Councils to issue penalty notices for poor attendance and unauthorised holidays during term time. Both sides of the argument believe they are right, but the only facts that are important are that poor attendance directly impacts on achievement and a student gets one chance at school.

Awards Evening and Sports Award Evening

On Thursday, 7th July staff, students and their families celebrated the school's sporting achievements from the 2015/16 academic year. Photographs and video clips from the Sports Awards evening and a full list of the winners can be found on the school website (very soon!). Again on Monday, 11th July we celebrated our annual Awards Evening which was extremely well attended. Congratulations to all award winners.

Reports

Reports for Years 9+10 will be given out on Monday, 18th July for students to bring home.

Calendar Dates

School opens for all students on Monday, 5th September at 8.20am

Autumn Term

Monday, 5th September 2016 – Friday, 21st October 2016

October half term holiday: Monday, 24th October 2016 – Friday, 28th October 2016

Monday, 31st October 2016 – Tuesday, 20th December 2016

Christmas holiday: Wednesday, 21st December 2016 – Tuesday, 3rd January 2017

Spring Term

Thursday, 5th January 2017 – Friday, 17th February 2017

February half term holiday: Monday, 20th February 2017 – Friday, 24th February 2017

Monday, 27th February 2017 – Friday, 31st March 2017

Easter holiday: Monday, 3rd April 2017 – Monday, 17th April 2017

Summer Term

Wednesday, 19th April 2017 – Friday, 26th May 2017

May half term holiday: Monday, 29th May 2017 – Friday, 2nd June 2017

Monday, 5th June 2017 – Friday, 21st July 2017

Teacher Training Days / Bank Holidays

School will be closed to students on the following days: Friday, 25th November 2016; Wednesday, 4th January 2017; Tuesday, 18th April 2017. Bank holiday – Monday, 1st May 2017

Finally, I would like to thank all parents and carers for your support this academic year and once again, the students thrive when home and school are working together effectively. I hope you have a restful (and dry!) summer break.

Yours sincerely

R O'Regan
Head teacher

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