



21<sup>st</sup> September 2017

Dear Parents/Carers,

With the approach of the end of week 3, I can report that the year has got off to an extremely good start. Pupils have rapidly settled into their new classes and regimes with our 'new' Year 5 being particularly impressive in this regard; an air of normality now exists. I have the privilege of walking around the school and visiting classes during the day, and have been delighted with the calm, productive environment that exists. Even the major bus issues have now been resolved!

The first day trips of the year have taken place with Year 6 pupils visiting Ramsey Heights. This has allowed them to extend their scientific understanding of habitats and ecology. The weather was very kind, especially given how wet the summer has been, and the pupils demonstrated great engagement with the activities, and behaved in a manner that reflected extremely well on them and the school.

As this year is likely to be, this week has had something of a bitter-sweet experience. Yesterday, I attended the first of a number of meetings to arrange for the formal closure of the school. Regrettably, this will be going on in the background for some considerable time.

However, against this, the vibrancy of Alban continues to come through. With this letter you will receive a copy of this term's clubs timetable which will also be available on the school's website. There are thirty varied opportunities being offered across the week either during lunchtime, after school or, occasionally, during development time. Please encourage your son/daughter to participate in one or more of these extra-curricular activities so that they can maximise their experience at Alban.

You will notice that one of the clubs is the 'show rehearsals'. I am very pleased to announce that this year's production will be Lionel Bart's 'Oliver'. A big time favourite, and certainly one of mine, I very much look forward to attending the performances that will take place towards the end of next term.

Alban's values, based on Christian teaching, were chosen a number of years ago by the then pupils, staff and governors. They continue to be an integral part of the school and how it operates from day to day. Each half term we have a particular focus on one of our six values – Koinonia (Community), Forgiveness, Wisdom, Trust, Love, Friendship – and include it within our collective worship programme. Attached is a sheet giving some background to this half term's value – Koinonia. Please take a few moments to acquaint yourself with it and how you can support your son/daughter's understanding.

More important is how these values underpin our daily lives and come through in our relationships with each other and wider society. I was particularly heartened a few days ago by the reaction of Zach, a Year 6 pupil, to the upset of a Year 5 girl in the dining hall. The girl in question had ordered a 'grab-a-bag' without the full



Unity CEMAT



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realisation of what it would contain which turned out to be very little of what she liked. The young man in question immediately stepped forward and swapped his hot meal band with the tearful girl. This care and consideration of another pupil powerfully demonstrated our values being lived out.

Our Harvest celebrations are fast approaching. As always we will, in part, be supporting the Bishop of St Alban's Harvest Appeal which this year is entitled 'Full of Beans'; this is through a collection of money. Normally, we also collect produce which is then distributed to one of a number of good causes locally. However, the Bishop has also asked us to raise funds to support those in the Caribbean devastated by Hurricane Irma, and now Maria. Some of the islands affected are in St Albans' companion diocese of North East Caribbean and Aruba. Consequently, I think it likely that we will forgo produce this year and ask for gifts of money to be split between the two causes. I will write again with more detail nearer to our thanksgiving services.

Despite being early in the school year, for three quarters of the school transition (from Years 6, 7 and 8) to secondary/upper school is a very live issue. We have already had the first of the presentations to pupils by one of the schools and these will continue over the next couple of weeks. I would encourage you to take advantage of the different schools' open evenings in order to find out what each really offers in relation to your son/daughter and to not base your judgements on reputation. Visits during the working day can also be arranged and are well worth doing if at all possible; your son/daughter can be released from school to accompany you on these.

Documentation on the application process has been sent out to all concerned. There is some variation in this according to the year group that your son/daughter is in. However, can I emphasise that the application deadline for all pupils is 31<sup>st</sup> October. If we can be of any help, please do not hesitate in contacting the school.

Tomorrow is our Fun Run and what I consider to be one of the highlights of the year when the whole of the school community comes together. The weather forecast is favourable and I am looking forward to this very special event; I hope to see many of you there.

Yours sincerely,

Chris Chipperton  
Headteacher



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