

Dear Parents & Carers

Welcome and welcome back!

I love the start of a new school year, and this year has been no exception. It has been a joy to see all our pupils returning after the summer break and to welcome New Year 7 and Year 12 pupils to Alder Grange. We have record breaking numbers of pupils in school, again. Our biggest ever Year 7 group and more in Year 12 than we have had for several years, so there is a lovely buzz about the place. We are heavily oversubscribed currently and have a number of new pupils joining us in all year groups. There are now well over 900 pupils at Alder Grange which is incredible. We are grateful for the trust all our parents place in us. Thank you for choosing Alder Grange.

We have welcomed some new faces to our staff team this term: A number of our new staff are already Alder Grangers having attended the school as pupils themselves: Mr Cardy teaching English, Mr Malik, Science and Mr Harter, maths. Mr Hanlon also returns to work at Alder Grange to teach DT, Mrs Haworth joins us to teach Food Technology, Ms Kolbuck in PE and Mr Starkey joins us in the cover supervisor team, moving from his previous role as a Teaching Assistant. We also have some changes to roles for other staff: Mr Fielding is the new Head of Year for Year 8, and Mrs Strachan is moving from Year 11 last year to Year 10. Whilst Ms Procter is on maternity leave, Ms Guy will be taking on the role of Curriculum Leader in Creative Arts and Mr Bibby will be doing the same in Health whilst Mrs Archer is temporarily absent through illness.

Over the summer we celebrated some fabulous examination results. Firstly, our Year 13 students achieved impressive results again across the board. Students have progressed to university to study a range of courses from Social Care, Sport Science, Medicine, Art and law. Others are off to follow apprenticeship routes. We are really proud of them all. We are particularly proud of Alice Trippier and Zahra Ali who are moving on to study medicine, having achieved outstanding A Level results. They worked really hard to achieve these grades and places to study medicine are in high demand so they have done really well to secure these.

Year 11 also really impressed us, and we were delighted with the results. Again the overall pass rate was strong and the number achieving higher grades was as strong as our previous best. We are thrilled that so many of our pupils have progressed to our sixth form and we look forward to seeing what they do next. We do still have places in a small number of courses if any of this cohort are still looking for a course or haven't settled in new settings.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the staff who worked so hard to support pupils through their studies. In addition we are grateful to our parents for working closely with us throughout the time these pupils were in school. It is most definitely a team effort!

As has become a regular fixture now, we were delighted to be able to host summer school for our new Year 7 pupils again this year. It makes a huge difference to the pupils as they make the big step up to Secondary school, and they have impressed us with their positive attitude so far.

The start of term has been really pleasing; it has been great to see pupils arriving at school dressed smartly in their school uniforms and getting into lessons and learning. The induction day was successful and helped to set them up for the year. We have reinforced our school rules and routines with them. I am grateful to you for your support and encouragement in these areas. It is worth a reminder here that we do have "nearly new" uniform available via our online 'uniform-ed' shop if you are still in need of any items. You can also contact reception for help.

As a whole school we have been working over recent months to define our priorities for this year and beyond. I am grateful to those parents who contributed by completing surveys.

Our priorities come under three key headings: Belonging, Achievement and Aspiration.

- Achievement - All pupils achieve their potential, thrive in school and make good academic progress, specifically this year we will be working on:
 - a. Curriculum schema and assessment maps - these are already on the website and in Google Classrooms, and will continue to be developed this year.
 - b. Language Mastery & Reading have been a priority for a number of years and will continue to be so with all pupils throughout school
 - c. Teaching & Learning - developing further our shared good practice and coaching for teaching staff
 - d. Progress measures for all pupils at KS4 and KS5 - a continued drive to make sure all our pupils achieve the best possible outcomes they can.
- Aspiration - All pupils and students aspire to achieve the best they can, have a positive view of 'what they are good at' and have clear goals for next steps after Alder Grange, the detail includes:
 - a. Careers & destinations - We aim to increase our Ambassadors linking these to lessons and learning and to increase parental involvement - do let us know if you are willing and able to help with this.
 - b. We are also keen to extend our Business & community links including increasing our community Governors - so if you know anyone who would be able to help us with this do get in touch.
 - c. The Wider Curriculum will continue to grow, with more pupils achieving rewards through our Being an Alder Granger Award and demonstrating the additional enrichments they add to their learning in school. Look out for more information about the wide range of clubs pupils can join in with coming very soon.
 - d. We aim to develop a new whole school Newsletter to recognise our pupils achievements on a termly basis
 - e. We are having a big House system relaunch this term, with even more competitions and excitement - who will be champion house in 2025?!
- Belonging - A continued "love of school" and sense of belonging focus for all pupils and all staff is developed through:
 - a. Wellbeing for all members of the school, staff and pupils, and is something we are really proud of already at Alder Grange. This year we aim to raise the profile of student ambassadors and get them more involved in supporting others.
 - b. Key to this area of development is excellent attendance - new DfE guidelines are being introduced nationally and we are planning to further develop our own new systems after we saw some real success last year. This is something we strongly believe relies upon great working relationships with you as parents, and we are grateful for the current support so many of you provide.
 - c. Careful induction and transition at all key stages ensures good subject choices and great preparation for achieving the best, for all our pupils. We are always developing and improving how we do this.
 - d. Positive behaviour systems - further development of new ag+ roles & responsibilities to support all our pupils. We have been really pleased with the recent reductions in suspensions and improved behaviour in school and look forward to improving yet more in this academic year.
 - e. Parent involvement - We launched a new Home school agreement at the end of the summer term. The only feedback was positive so we are moving forward with this and a further copy can be found here: [Home school agreement](#) new pupils will receive copies separately.

A full calendar of parents' evenings, drop down days, and other events is being updated and will be available on the website as soon as it is back up and running. The first important dates are:

- **Sixth Form parent information evening: Thursday 12th September**
- **Year 7&8 parents evening with Form Teachers: Thursday 26th September**
- **Year 10&11 parents evening with Form Teachers: Thursday 17th October**
- **Open evening for Year 6 to visit: Thursday 3rd October**
- **INSET days 3&4 : Thursday 3rd October and Friday 4th October**
- **Open evening for sixth form: Thursday 14th November**

We have further developed our curriculum information and assessment maps for parents on the website. This allows you to see what your child will be studying each term, what will be assessed and ways in which you can support them through wider learning. This is a section of the website that will continue to evolve over the year, so do keep checking, these can be found in the Curriculum section of the school website, listed under each subject area.

For those pupils in Year 8 - Year 11, you should have received a letter about last year's attendance. This will have reminded you of our current policy and the new DfE rules, these were also sent out in the summer. For pupils in Year 7 more information will arrive after the first half term. We are continuing our policy of half-termly letters and monitoring, but do contact us at any time if you have any worries about getting your child into school. It has been proven again this year that those pupils who attend well and are punctual to school, achieve better in their GCSE and A Level examinations, and we want all our pupils to make the most of every opportunity and excel with us.

Finally, as ever if you have any concerns, worries or issues regarding anything raised here, or at all, do not hesitate to contact us in school. If you are unsure of the correct member of staff please email or call reception for advice. We continue to value our partnership with parents and appreciate your support.

Here's to another fabulous school year!

Yours faithfully,



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