

April 2008

Dear Parents and Guardians

Following the shortest Lent term for fifty years, the new term has started with 856 boys on the school roll – eight more than the start of the school year. There has been a welcome ‘growth spurt’ in the roll of the Pre-Prep this year; together with the promise of a larger than usual intake at 13+ in September this augurs well as we face a less certain economic climate.

There may have been only 47 school days last term, but I was impressed by how students and staff alike fitted into this compressed timeframe the same schedule of events that normally extends over a further one or two weeks. The programme included the usual schedule of exams and reports, curriculum targets, and seven Parents Evenings. There were two excellent concerts which bore witness to the breadth of talent in both Prep and Senior schools and some notable achievements in games and special interest activities. At Basketball we have won the County Cup at every level; we had an encouraging season in both rugby and football and our Senior Golf Team has reached the final of the HMC Competition. The Public Speaking Team won the local Rotary Youth Speaks Competition and reached the final of the ESU Mace South East Region Competition. CCF and DofE flourish and we have been awarded status as an exemplar school for Young Enterprise (the Lower Sixth Business Competition). At the Wellington College Model United Nations Conference at which there were 38 delegations from 16 different schools, the SCC team was one of three to receive a commendation, with particular mention for Alex Hope-Rollinson and David Leahy. 43 students took part in a particularly memorable trip to China.

The new term, longer than usual, extends to just over twelve weeks in school. This affords all students with a good run up to exams, not least those facing Public Examinations who will have had a full month in school before the start of Study Leave. Detailed information is enclosed for parents of L6 and is going out under separate cover to parents in Forms 5 and U6. Here I should like to take the opportunity of emphasising three points. The first is the importance of consolidation and revision work that each student does **on his own**. Teachers present a framework, offer dialogue

and support throughout the course, but each candidate goes into the exam room and is assessed on his own; the revision period offers crucial time to prepare for this experience. The second point follows from this: Study Leave from school affords each the chance to work at home, in his own time, undisturbed and without time spent on journeys to and from school. Most prefer it that way, but the documentation sent to public exam groups draws attention to the option of coming to school during Study Leave and working under supervision here during the school day. Either way, students should take advantage of formal group revision sessions offered by staff. Thirdly, in the aftermath of results, senior staff will be in school, not least Dr Mark Grant, Head of Careers and HE Guidance, to offer support. The key dates in August are: 14th & 15th for AS and A Level and 21st & 22nd for GCSE.

May I draw to your attention the following dates in this term's calendar. There will be two joint productions involving St Columba's and Loreto, the first will be our annual School Musical which this year will be **Carousel 7.00 pm on 8th, 9th, 10th May**. This will take place in the College Hall and tickets are available from the School Office at £7 each. Secondly our joint drama group **LASCO: One Act Performances 7.30 pm on 26th and 27th June**. These performances will take place in the Maltings Arts Theatre St Albans. Further details will be available prior to the half-term break.

This term's **Head's Forum at 7 pm on Wednesday 4th June** will address the important topic of independent learning at which I will be joined by Mrs Clare Powlesland, Assistant Deputy Head Teaching and Learning. It would be helpful if you could let me know of your intention to attend.

Senior School Prize Giving 2.00 pm on Friday 27th June. This year the event will take place in the School Hall as the nave of the Abbey is currently closed for renovation. Further details will be communicated to the parents of prize winners nearer the time.

'A Grand Caribbean Gala Event: 7 pm till Late' on 28th June. Tickets are available at £55 each from the School Office (01727 855185) for this high profile event to which all parents are invited and which is organized by the Columban Parents Association.

When it comes to planning family holidays, it might help to have a reminder that the Spring Bank Holiday is on Monday 5th May while

for the rest of that week school is in session. **Half-term will be from Monday 26th to Friday 30th May** and the College breaks up for the Summer holiday on Wednesday 9th July at 2.00 pm. May I stress the importance of avoiding family holidays during term time.

On the subject of reminders, may I also request your support in ensuring that boys come to school well-presented in appropriate school uniform. Shoes must be black and polishable; a small number need to be reminded that the fashion for soft material shoes is not acceptable. Equally unacceptable are extreme hairstyles which may lead to boys being sent home. In all respects I expect the student body to adhere to a high standard of presentation.

We look forward to a successful term for all our students, not least those embarked upon important Public Examinations, and we look forward to welcoming you here at public events scheduled through the term.

Yours sincerely

John Stuart
Headmaster