

17 MAY 2010

From SMT

The Senior Management Team is keen to stay connected with our School Families during Term Two. We value our partnership between home and school and know the students benefit enormously through open communication. It is a pleasure to share these “good news” stories, which have all evolved this month.

We are happy to inform all families that the Principal, Mike Smith, is recovering well from his operation and is making excellent progress. He is delighted with the following news and he especially looks forward to sharing in the excitement of the new building projects on his return to school.

New School Website Launched

www.alphington.vic.edu.au

We are pleased to announce that the new official Alphington Grammar School website is now active. In order to go directly to our new site, please type the address www.alphington.vic.edu.au and remove the original web address, which may be in your bookmarks or favourites list.

Enjoy the ease of locating relevant information about school life and activities. There are some special online features, which I would like to highlight to all families:

- ❑ Online School Fee Payments.
- ❑ Online registration for Alumni – past graduates of Alphington Grammar School.
- ❑ Online Enrolment Applications for Pre-Prep; Local and International Students.

Updates to the website will be continually made to improve its relevance and keep members of the school community connected across the generations.

Weekly Assemblies & Key Messages

As all parents will be aware, every year level is now meeting on a regular basis in an assembly format. During these times there are acknowledgements of student achievement, messages about studying, upcoming exam information, You Can Do It reinforcement and messages about ways to get the best out of school as well as general organisational messages. At these times, year groups are also held accountable for their behaviour throughout the preceding week and encouraged to do better.

In recent weeks we have been looking at ways to encourage all students to take responsibility for themselves;...for our younger students this is something as simple as packing their bag, making sure they have their hat etc. For older students it includes the responsibility of ensuring that homework is completed, a study timetable has been planned etc.

Reminders about expectations are ongoing but essential. While we constantly talk to students about 'the future' and use that term as an incentive (or sometimes a threat!), research has shown that for young children (up to age 8) the 'future' is internalised as 2-3 days; for older children to mid teens it generally means, in reality, 3-4 weeks. (They will acknowledge that the future is years away, but cannot truly grasp it). Even for older teens the relative perception of 'the future' is rarely beyond a few months. Our encouragement then of students to 'look towards the future' needs to tie in with their moving perspective of it. While you may feel like you are 'nagging', try to think of it now as 'realigning' the future concept!

News Flash!!

New Primary Wing to include Years 3 - 6

The School Council has agreed to the recommendation to proceed with Stage 2 of the Primary School Classrooms project. This construction is a duplication of Stage 1 that includes four classrooms and a large open common area. The decision to proceed with Stage 2 was based on the cost effective outcome of constructing Stage 1 & 2 simultaneously, and the ability to accommodate all Years 3 to 6 students, meaning that the school will no longer require relocatable classrooms.

These are very exciting times for all of us as we witness the construction taking place. It is also pleasing to report that both the Primary School Wing and Multi –Purpose Hall are running on schedule and we are optimistic that if there are no unexpected disruptions, the facilities will be completed and ready for the 2011 School Year.

The building of these two projects has resulted in the need to review the School's Master Plan. This process has already commenced as part of the “School Strategic Plan” 2010 to 2014, with the Senior Management assessing the school's current facilities and developing a priority list for future campus development. This process is only in its preliminary stages and will be extended to include input from staff and professional consultants.

The ability of the school to develop a significant fund raising campaign will determine the school's future campus development. We are pleased to report that School Council has been proactive in researching possible major donor options to assist with future building and campus development programmes.

This is also an opportune time to thank all families who have supported the school's voluntary Multi-Purpose Hall Building Fund, which has raised an impressive \$67,718 to date.

Year 6 to 7 Day Visit Programme

The school held a very successful promotional day for current Year 6 and new Year 7 students, 2011, on Monday 10th May. The programme gave all students the opportunity to experience "A Day in the Life of Year 7" and included sessions with specialist staff in Enhancement, Greek, Art, Chinese, PE, Music, Science and General Studies.

Not only did the students participate in experiments, focus on Chinese themes and Greek Myths, they interacted socially and started to discuss their interests and dreams as they embark on Year 7.

This programme is an important part of our Transition planning between key year levels in the school. A three day transition programme takes place for all students in December as they complete their current year level and look forward to the challenges in 2011.

Alphington Grammar School and NAPLAN

As you are no doubt aware, NAPLAN testing has been happening this week and it has been a hot topic in the media. A couple of weekends ago *The Australian* published an article in which it revealed the Top 100 schools in Australia. Several parents have asked how we performed compared to the Top 100 schools in the country. Keeping in mind that a significant portion of the schools in the Top 100 published in *The Australian* are select entry schools, an analysis of the results does show that Alphington Grammar School is performing well in the areas of Reading and Numeracy. I would also add that the article did not include data on Writing - an area in which our school has done particularly well.

Based on the measure used in the article our NAPLAN results at Years 3 and 5 were:

- Reading: Only 70 points away from the Top 100 and well above the National average.
- Numeracy: Only 80 points away from the Top 100 and well above the National average.

In Years 7 & 9 our results were:

- Reading: Only 65 points away from the Top 100 and well above the National average.
- Numeracy: Only 37 points away from the Top 100 and well above the National average.

Analysis of our school's performance against other Victorian schools in our ICSEA (the measure of a school's student population socio-economic status) also shows that Alphington Grammar School has come:

- 1st in Reading (Yr 5)
- 2nd in Writing (Yr 5)
- 4th in Numeracy (Yr 5)
- 3rd in Writing (Yr 7)
- 4th in Writing (Yr 9)
- 4th in Numeracy (Yrs 7 & 9)

I'm sure you would agree that these results are very positive for our school. I would emphasise that the NAPLAN tests are just one measure of a school's performance. At Alphington Grammar School we do not just prepare our students for the NAPLAN tests. We offer a wide variety of curricular and co-curricular opportunities to help develop the whole child. All parents should remember this when considering the performance of our school. One of our strengths is the fact that we are a small school in which our student population is well known by our staff. This means that educational programmes can be more readily tailored to student needs.

Alphington Grammar School places a high degree of importance on our literacy and numeracy programmes. These are reviewed annually to ensure our students are being appropriately challenged and are reaching their potential. We are an open entry school committed to catering to the learning needs of all of our students. Our message to students this year has consistently been to encourage them to achieve their personal best. We are committed to continuing to strive to improve our programmes in order to better serve our students.

Year 9, 10 and 11 Mid -Year Exams

We are approaching a very important time of the year for our senior students. Year 9 and 10 students commence exams on Monday 31st May, 2010. Our Year 11 students commence exams on Friday 28th May, 2010. We have been encouraging students to study for the past few weeks and will continue to do so. It is important that students prepare diligently and thoroughly for these assessments. We have had Study Rooms open several lunchtimes for a while now and we continue to

encourage students to make use of these study rooms wherever possible. Our teachers have also been making themselves available at different times. It is important that students be prepared to get any queries answered before the exam periods.

Year 12 Exams and Reviews

Over the past few weeks review meetings with Year 12 students have been held to discuss their performance. I have extolled all students to really strive to apply themselves to their studies for the remainder of the year. With this in mind, some of our Year 12 students will have Practice Exams starting on Monday 24th May 2010. Practice Exams will be held in subjects with a June Exam (Accounting, Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Psychology). These practice exams will occur after school. All classes during this week will run as normal and students are expected to attend as usual.

We wish all of our students undertaking exams every success and encourage them to ensure they are thoroughly prepared.

With regards from the
Senior Management Team

Tracey Nicholson
Mark Stanton
Judy Fetter
Manuel Pappos