

July 2009

Dear Parents

As another academic year ends I would like to express my thanks to all for your continued support and commitment to Polam Hall. The staff here, both teaching and non-teaching, are unstinting in their efforts and I am most appreciative of all that they do. Working in partnership with parents ensures the ongoing success and wellbeing of our students.

We are looking forward to celebrating the well-earned successes of our 2009 public examination candidates on August 20th (for AS and A2 results) and August 27th (for GCSE results). Details of the arrangements in place are enclosed for students in Middle Five to Upper Sixth; we hope you will join us in the main foyer on results morning and I look forward to welcoming students and parents alike.

Looking ahead to the first half of the new term, please note the following key dates:

Wednesday 23rd September: PHPA AGM: Do please consider coming along. **All** are welcome. You can find out more information about the PHPA on the school website.

Saturday 17th October: OPEN MORNING – ALL Senior School students are expected to attend from 10.00am – 12.00 noon.

Thursday 22nd October: AWARDS EVENING – this is **compulsory** for all students in Middle Five, Upper Five and Sixth Form.

At the end of term we said farewell to a number of people whose time here has enriched our Polam Hall life. Miss Rosie Midgley moves on to a new position and her successors have been appointed for September. Mrs Mel Baksalara moves down south to be closer to her family and will take up a new post in a boarding school near her new home. We wish her every happiness. Ms Trudi Brunskill (English and Study Centre), Mr Geff Fogg (Art) and Mr Vic Kipling (Physics) are all veterans in their service to the school. All have been called back more than once so we bid them au revoir and thank them warmly for their recent contributions to Polam Hall School.

Children and colleagues alike will miss Mrs Pat De Martino, the first of our retirees, whose role as Junior School Senco has been taken over by Mrs Jan Steel. We wish them both every happiness and success next year. Mrs Kay Lawrence has taught Mathematics at Polam Hall School since 1983. Under her leadership the department has enjoyed outstanding success and regularly has the largest take-up at A level. She leaves with every good wish for health, happiness and an ever-reducing golf handicap. Mrs A P Hyslop has given a remarkable 41 years of service, in a variety of roles, to Polam Hall School. Words are wholly inadequate to express the indebtedness of generations of Polamites to Mrs Hyslop. Her legacy lies in the difference she has made to the lives of many. I am delighted that Mrs Hyslop will remain with us as Examinations Officer next year and that we will still be able to draw on her wisdom and unrivalled knowledge of all things Polam.

Over the summer Senior School girls, alongside the boys of Hurworth House, will enjoy their joint European Adventure holiday; girls from years 6 and 7 recently returned from an action-packed weekend in Patterdale and students have successfully completed Duke of Edinburgh expeditions at both Bronze and Silver levels. None of this is possible without the goodwill and experience of staff who so generously give up their time.

In our final assemblies we celebrated, as always, the range of achievements of our pupils, applauding their many individual and groups successes. The last week of the term saw us present a cheque for £4,174 to Help for Heroes – a remarkable whole school effort. Throughout the year you have all had the opportunity to see the students rise to the occasion at the many events – sporting, musical, dramatic and social – which make up our annual cycle. I would like to end the year by sharing with you just a few of my personal highlights of 2008/9.

- The letters I receive when our students go out on trips and visits – and are such outstanding ambassadors of Polam Hall School. This happened following the Edinburgh trip, and Upper Five Prom and the York visit, to name but a few
- The feedback from local firms and from the students themselves following the Middle Five Work Experience. Several local employers who will not normally take Work Experience students make an exception for Polam Hall. The comments on the quality of our students make for heartening reading.
- The Upper Sixth 2009's last day in school. All leavers want to remember their final day fondly; this Upper Sixth made sure that everyone in the school had a day to remember. They took over the dinner ladies' duties, entertained the teaching staff to a lovely barbecue, and exemplified all that is best about the Polam Hall spirit.

We have had another busy, productive and exhilarating year. As I write the contractors are in school – knocking down walls in Elm Grove to create our new Foundation Stage classrooms, tearing up the netball courts to create a state-of-the-art new surface, and demolishing the kitchen in South View to put in a brand new one!

An exciting set of new opportunities awaits in 2009/10. Please find the important reminders for parents enclosed with this letter – your support in these key areas is greatly valued.

I look forward to welcoming everyone back in September.

Wednesday 2nd: Lower Four and Sixth

Thursday 3rd: Whole school

I wish you all a very happy relaxing summer break.

M Green (Miss)
Head