



THE CEDARS
SCHOOL

5th April 2019

Dear Parents,

Fortune favours the brave

This morning, during our final assemblies, I spoke to your sons about fortitude. For a lot of boys, 'fortitude' is synonymous with 'courage' and, while there are certainly occasions on which they may need to display courage – physical or otherwise – for most, it is the more mundane meaning of the word which is likely to have the most immediate practical application.

Almost everything we do at school is effortful. And that is as it should be as anything worthwhile demands perseverance and self-control. We learn to speak our native language quite easily but learning to write well, learning to think mathematically, creating something beautiful, learning to play a musical instrument, acquiring sufficient knowledge of the world to be able to reason and analyse, developing a skill, getting fit – all of this requires sustained effort.

In the world of education we talk about 'threshold concepts'. In general, these are the difficult bits of subjects which can tempt students to throw in the towel. But when students overcome them, their efforts are more than repaid as they lead to a deeper understanding and/or a transformed view of the subject. It is precisely fortitude – keeping going when the going gets tough – which enables students to successfully navigate these challenges and make significant progress.

As parents, we have a key role to play in developing this virtue. Jane Lunnon, headteacher of Wimbledon High School, recently wrote in the Times Educational Supplement about what she describes as 'over-parenting'. This is a topic we've discussed at several information evenings over the past couple of years (though we usually call it 'over-functioning parenting') and it refers to the tendency of some parents to try to remove all obstacles from their child's path. It's perfectly understandable that parents should want to do this. We all want our children to be happy and so why not make life easier for them? The problem with swooping in to rescue our children is that it doesn't make life any easier or happier for them in the long run.

The years our children spend in our care, in a loving, supportive environment, provide the ideal arena in which to make and learn from mistakes without those mistakes leading to irrevocable harm. If we constantly intervene in our children's lives, however, by trying to sort out their friendship issues, making excuses for them when they have messed up in some way and trying to shield them from any negative consequences that their actions may have, then we deprive them of the opportunity to grow into mature adults. And then when they leave that family support, they leave unprepared for what life will throw at them.

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If we want our children to be happy, we need to make sure we help them to mature by allowing them to fail and teaching them to deal with it. Then they will be able to cope with the greater challenges that adult life will hold.

During my years of teaching I have noticed that those parents who see their role as raising men and women will habitually take the long view. They will not be discouraged by setbacks because they will see them as an opportunity for growth. They know that mistakes are going to be made and they realise that every mistake learnt from in childhood is helping to prepare their child for happy, well-adjusted adulthood. (I should add that there are obviously some mistakes – like drug abuse - that we really don't want our children to make and should do everything possible to protect them from. Taking the long view will help us to discern and act accordingly.)

School news

As our first group of Year 13 students near the end of their time at the school, I can report that they have, between them secured offers from Birmingham, Kings College London, Leeds, Navarre (Spain), Nottingham, Oxford, Queen Mary, Southampton and Surrey to study a broad range of subjects: Classics with Oriental Studies, Medicine, Biological Sciences, Physiotherapy, Computer Science, Civil Engineering, Spanish & Business Studies, Law. We wish them, and those preparing for GCSEs, all the best in their exams!

Many of you will have seen our new cricket nets on the school field and I can also report that the field immediately at the back of the school to the left of the playing fields, has been purchased for the school and will feature in the planning application to be submitted to Croydon Council later this month. There is no question of building on this land but we will try to make use of the extra space in an unobtrusive way which preserves its natural beauty.

Various pupils have received well-deserved plaudits in the pages of our bulletins over the last term but today we must congratulate one of our first ever parents, Mr Daniel Taylor, who received an MBE at Buckingham Palace earlier this week! Pictures to follow in our next bulletin.

Staff changes

Mr Robbie Carew has been a great colleague during the short time he has been with us. He has made a great contribution to several areas of school life, including the Science Department, and struck up an excellent rapport with those he taught. After Easter, he leaves for an extended school placement at Viaro School in Barcelona after which he plans to return to the UK. It is not beyond the bounds of possibility that he may find his way back to The Cedars in due course. We have engaged a temporary replacement for Mr Carew for the first three weeks of next term after which Mr Harland, Mr Rix and Dr Virgili will take over until the end of term.

Mr Carew's permanent replacement is **Mr Thomas Part** who has been appointed as Head of Science starting in September. Mr Part, a chemist, graduated from Leeds University before taking a PGCE in London. He has several years teaching experience under his belt and an interesting CV which includes working as a building site foreman in Canada when he was 18 and representing his home county (Hampshire) at both cricket and rugby.

Happy Easter!

Easter changes everything. It certainly changed the apostles who were transformed from an unremarkable group of individuals to men with such fortitude that they were able to travel much of the known world and shed their blood for their belief in Christ's resurrection. If we share the apostles' faith we should be changed too. As Mother Teresa once said: *"Remember that the Passion of Christ ends in the joy of the Resurrection of Christ! When you feel in your own heart the suffering of Christ, remember the resurrection has to come, the joy of Easter has to dawn."*

Thank you most sincerely for your support of the school and I wish you and your families a happy and restful holiday.

The new term begins at 8:35am on **Wednesday 24th April 2019**.

With every good wish,



R. Teague

Mr Robert Teague
Headmaster

