



Weekly Newsletter 22nd October 2026

Dear members of the Aldercar High School community,

As we reach the end of another busy half term, I want to take a moment to say how incredibly proud I am of our school community. Schools are about so much more than lessons, results and timetables; they are about people, relationships and belonging. Every day at Aldercar, I see young people growing in confidence, staff going above and beyond, and families working alongside us to help our students succeed. We will always have things we want to improve, but I hope everyone can pause for a moment and recognise just how much there is to be proud of.

At the heart of everything we do is a simple belief: **every young person deserves to feel that they belong, that they are valued and that they can succeed.** Our expectations remain high because we believe deeply in what our students are capable of. Being **Ready, Respectful and Responsible** is not simply a set of words; it is about the culture we create together, every single day. Thank you to our students, staff, parents and carers for the part you have played this half term. I hope everyone enjoys a well-earned break and returns refreshed and ready for our next chapter.

Term date reminder - We already look forward to welcoming our wonderful young people back on Monday the 2nd of November 2026.

Newsletter quote of the week:

"Success is the sum of small efforts, repeated day in and day out." – Robert Collier

Diary Dates

Friday 23rd October – Inset Day

Monday 25th-29th October – Half Term Week

Thursday 5th and Friday 6th November – London Trip

Monday 9th – Friday 20th November – Year 11 Mock Exams

Wednesday 11th November – Remembrance Day/Dress to Impress

Wednesday 2nd December – Year 10 Parents Evening 16:00-19:00

Friday 4th December – Inset Day

Monday 7th - Friday 11th December – Rewards Assemblies

Thursday 10th December – Christmas Talent Show

Wednesday 16th December – Activity Day 1

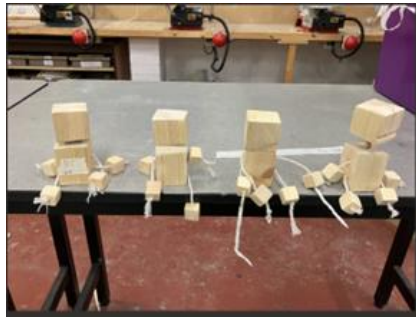
Friday 18th December - Last Day of Term

Curriculum Captures: Technology

Year 7 – Block Bots

Year 7 students have been developing their block bot projects — creative small wooden block bots! The bots are made from 40 mm × 40 mm wooden heads and 60 mm × 60 mm wooden bodies. Students have been enjoying their first practical project since arriving at Aldercar.

Small blocks... BIG ideas!



Year 8 – Wooden Gum Ball Machines

Year 8 students have been developing their practical skills by making impressive wooden gum ball machines.

Very impressive skills on display — some amazing work!

Creative design meets practical skill.



Year 9- Green Energy

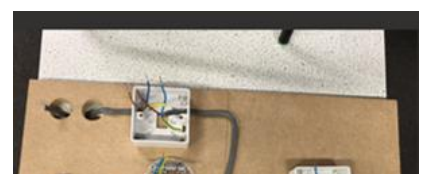
Year 9 have been set a challenging project based on green energy. Some very impressive designs are taking shape!

Students have designed and made timber wind turbines. After half term, there will be a competition to find the best and most effective turbine blades.

Students could win numerous chocolatey prizes!



Year 10 – Construction



Year 10 construction students have been hard at work this half term.

Practical skills have included:

- Brickwork
- Electrical work
- Carpentry

Real skills. Real futures.



Year 11 – Unit 3 Coursework

Year 11 students have been extremely busy producing practical outcomes for their Unit 3 coursework.

Excellent tiling skills are evident in the photographs, with some outstanding work produced by the students.

Fantastic work — well done!



Post-16 Inclusion Centre Open Evening

We were delighted to welcome students and families from many local schools to our Post-16 Inclusion Centre Open Evening on Tuesday 20th October. The evening was well attended and provided a wonderful opportunity to showcase the fabulous learning opportunities, activities and support we offer, alongside our new space. Thank you to everyone who joined us—we thoroughly enjoyed sharing what makes our provision such a welcoming and inclusive place to learn. If your young person has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and is looking for a local Post-16 placement, please get in touch using the contact details provided below. Visits can be arranged so you can meet the team, explore the Centre and find out more about our provision.

Anne Foster - Post-16 Inclusion Co-ordinator - afoster@aldercarhighschool.co.uk

Sue Longdon - Post-16 Inclusion Deputy - slongdon@aldercarhighschool.co.uk

Telephone: 01773 712477

Our Rewards Shop Is Now Open!

We are delighted to announce that our new Rewards Shop is now open, and it has already got off to a fantastic start, with **more than 250 students** visiting the shop during its **very first week!**

Students have been enjoying the opportunity to spend their hard-earned R Points on a range of rewards, from sweets, chocolate and stationery to games and sports equipment.

The shop has been designed to give students something exciting to work towards, recognising their positive behaviour, effort and achievements throughout school. With rewards available at different point values, there is something for everyone, whether students choose to save up for a bigger reward or enjoy a smaller treat along the way.

It has been fantastic to see so many students getting involved and taking pride in spending the points they have earned. The Rewards Shop is just one part of our wider rewards scheme, with **exciting reward trips coming soon**, giving students even more to aim for and look forward to!

As the scheme continues to grow, we hope to see students continuing to demonstrate our school values by being **Ready, Respectful and Responsible**, making positive choices and taking pride in their achievements every day.

Earn • Collect • Redeem — every positive choice counts!



100% Students

A huge congratulations to 560 students who have achieved 100% this half term and are currently eligible for our reward day! The school is incredibly proud of your commitment, dedication and hard work. Keep up the excellent effort, maintain these high standards, and continue to make yourselves and the school proud! Letters regarding the rewards trip have been sent home.



Sparx Reader

Sparx Maths

Sparx Science

PLEASE TRY LOGGING IN FROM HOME

By October Half Term all students will have had a Sparx Reader session - learning how to log in and choose their first book. We would now like students to start logging in at home and completing at least 300 Sparx Reader Points (about 30 mins reading) each week. This will be converted to 50 extra Aldercar R points! This will be the same for Sparx Maths and Sparx Science using XP points.

To get onto Sparx reader, students need to go to www.sparxreader.com

Click the login button (top right hand side of screen) and Enter 'Aldercar High School' when asked for school name. Then click the 'Log into Sparx using Microsoft' blue button.

Please note: Sparx uses the usual school email and password students use to access computers in school. If it does not work, please check that the email is the **new updated email** which should be –

Start year then first initial then surname followed by @students.aldercarhighschool.co.uk

e.g. Joe Bloggs in Year 7 would be
26jbloggs@students.aldercarhighschool.co.uk

Santa Clause in Year 8 would be
25sclause@students.aldercarhighschool.co.uk

Please try to log in this week and let us know if you are having any issues with access. The computer room will be open at lunchtime if any student needs help logging in at school or at home. Parent/Carers can also contact school using the info@aldercarhighschool.co.uk email.

Sports Hall Athletics

On Tuesday six student took part in some Sports Hall Athletics at Alfreton Leisure centre. They were a credit to the school and even had a few positive comments from other schools about our behaviour/politeness 😊.

The students took part in a range of activities such as standing long jump, standing throw, speed bounce and relay races. The students placed 2nd out of 5 schools which was a fantastic result. They each received a well-earned certificate.



Cross Country Competition

A chilly afternoon on Wednesday at John Flamsteed for cross country with some of our year 7 and 8 students who did really well and gave their race their very best efforts!

Each race consisted of around 40-50 students. Those who finished top 20 qualify to race for Amber Valley.

Y7

Alan K 18th
Rio H 21st
Dexter K 22nd
Phoebe H 25th
Amber W 32nd
Felicity M 24th

Y8

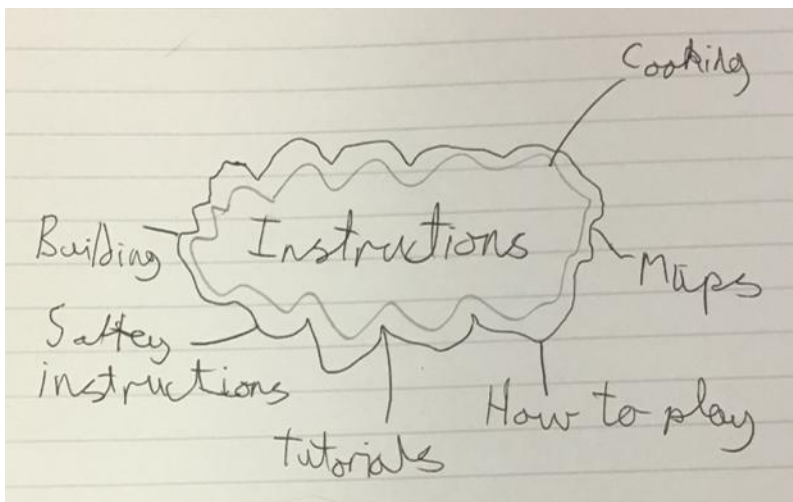
Lily H 29th
Ivyleigh D 28th
Daisy H 27th
George J 29th
Mikey M 26th
Harry P 17th



Life Skills Sessions

During Life Skills sessions this half term, students have been learning about instructions and the importance of reading, understanding and following them carefully. Topics have included making a ham and cheese sandwich, creating origami, writing instructions to match pictures, and following step-by-step instructions to decorate pumpkins. Throughout these activities, students have explored the importance of giving clear, specific instructions in the correct order, learning that vague or unclear directions can lead to confusion and unexpected results. These practical activities have helped students develop their communication, sequencing and problem-solving skills while recognising how important clear instructions are in everyday life.





FIREWORK SAFETY WORKSHOP



In Deaf Base, we were delighted to welcome Della, who came in to talk to our students about the dangers of bonfire season and how to stay safe. The session was informative and engaging, helping students understand the potential risks and the importance of making safe choices. Everyone left with a better awareness of what they should and shouldn't do to keep themselves and others safe during bonfire season. A big thank you to Della for taking the time to share this important advice with us!

School Ties

As we approach the half-term break, it is a good opportunity to remind everyone of the high standards that make our school community such a positive place to learn. Clear expectations help ensure that all students are ready to succeed and take pride in representing our school.

Ties to be Worn After Half-Term

From the first day back after half-term, all students are expected to wear their school tie as part of the full school uniform. Wearing the correct uniform demonstrates our school values of being Ready, Respectful and Responsible every day.

- **Ready** – Wearing the correct uniform ensures students are prepared for learning from the moment they arrive at school.
- **Respectful** – Taking pride in our appearance shows respect for ourselves, our peers and our school community.
- **Responsible** – Following our uniform expectations demonstrates personal responsibility and a commitment to our school standards.

We would like to thank parents and carers for their continued support in helping students arrive at school wearing the correct uniform each day. We look forward to welcoming everyone back after half-term looking smart, professional and ready to learn.

Ready. Respectful. Responsible. Every day.



✦ Exciting Partnership with KTCO Studios ✦

We are delighted to be working in partnership with KTCO Studios, one of the East Midlands' leading performing arts studios, to create new opportunities for students within the Aldercar High School Performing Arts Department.

Our brand-new Dance Club launches on Friday 6th November at lunchtime, where students will have the opportunity to work with KTCO Studios and their BTEC Level 3 students.

Each half term will focus on a different style of dance, giving students the chance to develop new skills, build confidence and experience different styles of performance. The group will then work towards creating a performance for our Summer Showcase.



Starts: Friday 6th November



13:15–13:35



P02



Collect a lunch pass from Mrs Wilde. Lunch can be collected afterwards.

All abilities are welcome!

This is just the start of our exciting partnership, so look out for more opportunities coming from KTCO Studios and the Aldercar High School Performing Arts Department! ✨

REAL
DANCERS
REAL
OPPORTUNITIES
♥

KTco

STUDIOS

PROFESSIONAL THEATRE COMPANY

RUNS OUR

INSPIRE
CREATE
PERFORM
BELONG



DANCE CLUB

ALL
ABILITIES
WELCOME
♥

BE BOLD
BE CREATIVE
BE YOU

MOVE • LEARN • EXPRESS • TOGETHER



FRIDAY
LUNCH TIME



13:15 - 13:35
GET LUNCH AFTER



P02
DANCE STUDIO



COLLECT A
LUNCH PASS
FROM MRS WILDE
IF YOU ARE WANTING
TO ATTEND

A DIFFERENT STYLE OF DANCE EACH HALF TERM
TO WORK ON A PERFORMANCE TO DO IN OUR
SUMMER SHOWCASE! ♥



STREET



COMMERCIAL



CONTEMPORARY



JAZZ



MUSICAL THEATRE

AND
MORE!

PASSION
PEOPLE
POTENTIAL

KTco

STUDIOS

PROFESSIONAL THEATRE COMPANY

DANCE
CREATES A
BRIGHTER
TOMORROW
♥



ALDERCAR
HIGH SCHOOL

EVERY CHILD KNOWN,
EVERY LESSON COUNTS,
EVERY FUTURE UNLOCKED.

Student TARGET GRADES

Supporting every student to achieve their potential

WHAT ARE TARGET GRADES?

This week, students have been given their target grades for each subject. These targets show the level we expect them to achieve by the end of their time at Aldercar High School. They are **aspirational but realistic** and are designed to help every student **aim high** and **make strong progress**.



High expectations for every student

HOW ARE TARGETS CREATED?



**AIM HIGH
MAKE PROGRESS
BE EXCEPTIONAL**

Targets are generated using a combination of FFT's national data (FFT 50 and FFT 20) based on each student's Key Stage 2 performance. This places each student between the top 50% and top 20% of students nationally with similar starting points.

This means the targets are challenging, but achievable, and are not a ceiling. If students exceed their targets, they will be performing in the top half – or higher – nationally compared to similar students.

TARGET STICKERS

Students will have a target sticker on the front of their exercise books to help them keep track of their targets in every subject.



KEY STAGE 3 TARGETS (YEARS 7, 8 AND 9)

KS3 students are given banded targets for GCSE subjects and vocational targets for vocational subjects.

GCSE TARGET BANDS
(Years 7, 8 and 9)

1 – 4

4 – 6

7 – 9

VOCATIONAL TARGETS
(Years 7, 8 and 9)

L1D Level 1 Distinction

L2P Level 2 Pass

L2M Level 2 Merit

L2D Level 2 Distinction

KEY STAGE 4 TARGETS (YEARS 10 AND 11)

KS4 students are given a specific target for GCSE subjects and vocational targets for vocational subjects.

GCSE TARGETS
(Years 10 and 11)

A number between
9 – 1

This is the grade your child is targeting to achieve, or higher, by the end of Year 11.

VOCATIONAL TARGETS
(Years 10 and 11)

L1D Level 1 Distinction

L2P Level 2 Pass

L2M Level 2 Merit

L2D Level 2 Distinction

HOW DO NEW GRADES COMPARE TO A*–G?

The table below shows how the current GCSE 9 – 1 grades and vocational grades compare to the old A* – G grades, to help you see what each grade represents.

New GCSE Grades	Legacy GCSEs	Vocational Qualifications
9	A*	Distinction* 8.5
8	A*	Distinction 7
7	A	Distinction 7
6	B	Merit 5.5
5	C	Pass 4
4	C	Pass 4
3	D	Distinction* 3
2	E	Distinction 2
1	F	Merit 1.5
U	G	Pass 1
U	U	Not Yet Achieved (NYA)



The new 9 – 1 GCSE grading system means that grade 9 is the highest grade (equivalent to the old A*), and grade 1 is the lowest (equivalent to the old G).



Vocational qualifications are graded as Level 1 Distinction, Level 2 Pass, Level 2 Merit and Level 2 Distinction, and are broadly equivalent to GCSE grades.



ALDERCAR
HIGH SCHOOL

EVERY CHILD KNOWN,
EVERY LESSON COUNTS,
EVERY FUTURE UNLOCKED.



READY



RESPECTFUL



RESPONSIBLE

READING CHAMPIONS

Autumn Term 2026

The Reading Champion awards are intended to reflect reading engagement and library use across all abilities. This term, **Emmanuel N** has received his second award for taking the most books out of the library: 21 so far!



Maddie W has been an outstanding library user this term. She is always polite and helpful, and has delved into our non-fiction section on astronomy and the planets.

Spencer P-P has shown great dedication to reading this term, and has also helped make the library look spooky for Hallowe'en.

22nd Oct 2026



CONGRATULATIONS!

Book Reviews

22nd Oct 2026

Signed, Sealed, Dead by Cynthia Murphy

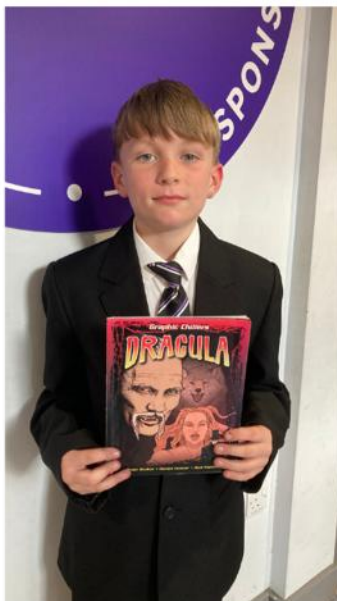
When Paige moves into her new house, she receives a letter: 'Did you know the girl who lived in this house before you was murdered?'

What did you like about the book?

Scary!



Reviewed by Blake N, 9C



Graphic Chillers: Dracula by Bram Stoker, Daniel Conner and Rod Espinosa

The classic gothic tale gets the comic book treatment.

What did you think of the book?

It was quite a good book, I would like it if there was more to it.

Describe it in three words:

Interesting, cliff-hanging, makes you think.



William M, 7A

Got an opinion about something you've read?
See Miss Bell in the library



Understanding autism (ASD)

Recognising differences. Supporting every learner.



Every young person is different

Autism, also called autism spectrum disorder (ASD), is a lifelong difference in how the brain develops. It can affect communication, learning and sensory experiences. Each autistic student has their own strengths and support needs. Autism is not an illness.



Communication & connection

Some students take language literally or find sarcasm and unspoken social rules confusing. They may need longer to understand a question. Clear communication and shared interests can help build connections.



Sensory experiences

Noise, bright lights, smells or clothing textures may feel overwhelming. Other students seek movement or pressure that feels calming. A busy corridor or lunch hall can therefore be difficult to manage.



Routines & interests

Predictable routines can feel reassuring, while unexpected changes may cause anxiety. Strong interests can bring enjoyment and connection. Repetitive movements, sometimes called stimming, may help a student feel calm or comfortable.



Less visible needs

Some students hide or copy behaviours to fit in. This is called masking and can be exhausting. Appearing to cope at school does not always mean a young person feels comfortable or needs no support.



Helping students thrive

Understanding the person. Making learning accessible.



Make meaning clear

Helpful approaches include direct language, short instructions and time to process a response. A written example or visual reminder can make a task clearer. Check understanding sensitively and respect different ways of communicating.



Prepare for change

A visual timetable or simple checklist can show what happens next. Explain changes in advance where possible: what will be different, what will stay familiar and who can help. Agree support with the student.



Notice overwhelm

Ask which sounds, spaces or situations feel difficult. Consider quieter seating, agreed breaks or access to a calmer space. If a student is overwhelmed, use calm, brief language and allow time to recover before discussing what happened.



When to seek advice

These experiences alone do not confirm autism. If you have concerns, speak to the SEND team or your GP about next steps. An autism assessment is carried out by specialists. Share what helps your child, alongside any difficulties.

Let's work together

Tell us about your child's strengths, interests and experiences so we can discuss support that fits their needs.

SEND@aldercarhighschool.co.uk

RESPONSIBLE

RESPECTFUL

READY



Aldercar
HIGH SCHOOL



BREAKFAST CLUB

FREE BREAKFAST EVERY MORNING

IN THE PHOENIX BUILDING

≡ INCLUDING: ≡



TOAST



BAGELS



JAM



CHOCOLATE
SPREAD



BISCOFF
SPREAD



JUICE



FRESH
FRUIT



☆ **THE BEST WAY TO**
START THE SCHOOL DAY ♥



EVERY
CHILD KNOWN



EVERY
LESSON COUNTS



EVERY
FUTURE UNLOCKED

Kind Regards

Phil Smith

Proud Headteacher Aldercar High School

'Every child known, every lesson counts, every future unlocked'

Chair of the Inclusion Strategy Group

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