



To All Parents

Friday 14 February 2020

Dear Parents

Fundraising Project - Floodlit Astroturf Pitch - **'AIM FOR THE STARS!'**

I hope that you are all well and that everyone is enjoying the lighter mornings and evenings at the start and end of the school day!

As a school, we are constantly looking for ways to improve the educational offering for our children. Over the course of the last year, we have increased provision for Forest School and Mindfulness as well as introducing Enrichment for Years 3 to 6 to ensure that our children are cherished and challenged both within the curriculum and beyond it.

We are very pleased with the reaction from the children to these changes and, as ever, we are also very proud of the academic achievements of our children in their exams at 11+. We firmly believe that in order to achieve a great education there has to be rigour and aspiration, alongside breadth of learning opportunities and fun!

Following on from the successful opening of the new Sports Hall, which has greatly improved our ability to offer sporting opportunities all year round, the next important stage of development for the school is the addition of a Floodlit Astroturf pitch to enhance yet further the facilities that we can offer to our children. The huge advantage of an astroturf pitch is that it is not weather dependent, unlike grass, and with floodlighting it can be used throughout the winter months. An additional benefit, which will have a direct impact on increased curriculum time, will be the ability to host home fixtures, again saving valuable teaching time. It will also allow for more children to have the opportunity to participate in clubs after school such as Hockey, Netball and Football without the need to spend time on buses to access these facilities elsewhere. We would be able to use the space for break times in all weathers which is important as we know there is a clear correlation between being active outdoors and mental wellbeing in all areas of life.

This project is part of our School Masterplan, which can be viewed on our [website](#), but it would be wonderful to accelerate this development if at all possible. Our MAP representatives have spoken to the school about having a target to fundraise for in order to get behind school events and projects; it is my feeling that we should aim high! The astroturf project offers the opportunity for the school community to come together and aspire to deliver a significant project, which all children can benefit from, rather than smaller projects which suit different areas of the school. We will be looking to raise £300,000 which I appreciate is not an insignificant target! As we are launching an 'astro' fundraising initiative then why not **AIM FOR THE STARS!**

The development of an astroturf pitch links perfectly with my vision for Sport at The Manor. Since I started here in 2018, Sport has been one of the most regular topics that parents wish to discuss with me, from selection criteria for matches to how we provide opportunities for all children. We have worked very hard to address these issues with an increase in curriculum time for Sport (without losing any other teaching time) as well as aiming to provide a more varied, affordable and inclusive club offering.

Another benefit of the astroturf facility will be for wider public use. Outside of our core school hours, we would be able to use this space for the community and for other local schools whose children are not in such a privileged position as ours; I believe that we all have a fundamental responsibility to give back and to contribute positively to our local community.

Our next fundraising events as a school are the **Quiz Night** (Saturday 7 March) and the **Summer Ball** (Saturday 13 June); these are wonderful opportunities to have a fun evening with friends as well as to kick-start our campaign.

Please purchase your tickets for the Ball via the school [website](#). Bookings for the **Quiz Night** can be made by emailing Kerry Arnold (karnold@manorprep.org) by Friday 28 February (don't forget to include your team name!) – we would love to see as many of you as possible there!

The **Summer Ball** in particular represents an occasion for us all to rise to and with over 100 tickets already sold we are looking forward to a very enjoyable and successful evening. We have previously sent out a request to parents for donations for the Auction of Promises; we would be really grateful if people can have a think about what they might be able to offer to make it a memorable occasion and to get the fundraising underway in earnest. Please remember that it is not just physical items which appeal in these situations but money-can't-buy experiences as well. Maybe you work somewhere particularly interesting and people might like to visit, or perhaps your company can offer vouchers or discounts for products or services?

In order to get the ball rolling, we are bringing in an external company, Superstar Auctions, who have an incredible array of items to offer and who will run both a silent and live auction for us at the Ball. We are also proactively approaching local businesses to see what they can contribute. It's early days but we have already received taxi vouchers from Go Green Taxis, courtesy of Manor parents. In addition to this we have been promised a free place on two different local holiday camps, worth £200 and £350 each (full details coming soon!), vouchers for The Race Hut and a meal for 4 at The Black Boy pub in Old Headington, courtesy of Lamb Catering who are catering for the Ball. We have received very generous donations from Manor parents of a Yellow Jersey signed by Bradley Wiggins from his 2012 Tour de France win, a beautiful equestrian painting by Alasdair Banks, and a framed, signed Oasis photo with signed musical scores ('Don't Look Back in Anger' and 'Wonderwall').

We are also keen to hear from parents who might like to contribute directly to our '**AIM FOR THE STARS**' campaign; please feel free to contact me if this is something you would like to discuss.

It would be lovely to see the astroturf pitch up and running in September 2021, if at all possible, and I know that you will get behind this campaign to help us to achieve our ambitious target!

I hope that you all have a very happy half term.

Yours

Alastair Thomas
Headmaster