

17<sup>th</sup> January 2025

Dear Families

The ski trip seems to be going well so far. Only one lost passport and one hurt knee at the moment. Everyone seems to be having a fabulous time though.

We started the week with a Youth St. Vincent de Paul conference hosted at St. Paul's. It was lovely to welcome children from secondary schools across the Diocese and the event culminated in a Mass celebrated by Fr Emmanuel. On Monday evening Governors met for the Curriculum and Teaching meeting. The agenda was jam packed and Governors enjoyed listening to all of the exciting developments taking place with Careers, The Emmaus Department, the development of our study curriculum and provision for pupil premium children.

On Tuesday evening Heads and Chairs of Governors of the Milton Keynes Catholic Schools met together to plan for a visit by Bishop David which is taking place this evening.

On Wednesday evening there was a parents' information evening for Year 11 parents. At this event we were able to share with parents our concern that some students in Year 11 haven't yet appreciated a sense of urgency when it comes to preparation for GCSEs. There is a very much relaxed approach from some students at the moment, one that we haven't really experienced with any other year group before. There is a fine balance to be struck between putting too much pressure on students as exams approach and encouraging some to take them seriously! I appreciate support from parents in encouraging their children to do what is needed to help them be successful. A good starting point for revision is the resources available on our new SharePoint platform.

Last night Year 11 and 12 parents were able to have virtual mentoring appointments with mentors. I hope families found these helpful. A face to face mentoring evening for these year groups takes place on Thursday.

In this week's sports fixtures our Year 11 basketball team played a hard fought match against Brooklands, winning 92 – 26. The Year 11 team also played Webber Independent School, winning 81 – 3 and doing well with their sportsmanship and unselfish play, making sure everyone on the team scored a few baskets. Our Year 7 football team drew 1 – 1 against Walton High. Both teams went into the game unbeaten, so it was always going to be a close encounter. Although Walton High led for the majority of the game, St Paul's showed real character and battled to try and get themselves back into the game. We were rewarded with an equaliser with just four minutes left, so both teams were able to keep their unbeaten record.

Headteacher:  
Jo-Anne Hoarty

St Paul's Catholic School  
Phoenix Drive  
Leadenhall  
Milton Keynes  
MK6 5EN

Telephone  
01908 669 735

Email  
enquiries@st-pauls.org.uk

Web  
www.st-pauls.org.uk



Next week is very busy at St. Paul's. On Monday all pastoral leaders will be out of school for their annual conference. I will not be in school on Tuesday to Thursday next week as I will be carrying out a Catholic Schools Inspection in a school in another Diocese. I will be available via email though if parents have any urgent issues. On Tuesday, our KS3 Arts Award students are taking part in a pottery workshop. Less pleasurable will be vaccinations for Year 9 that day! There is a parents' information evening for Year 9 that evening. On Wednesday, Year 8 students will be going to London to see a performance of The Lion King. On Thursday evening the Resources and Personnel committee of the Governing Board will meet. The focus of this meeting is on budget planning for next year.

All year 10 pupils will be out of school next week on their work experience. I really hope they gain a great deal from this valuable experience. We generally find that Year 10 return to school after work experience with renewed focus and determination. I'm sure they will be more than a little tired next week when the reality of the world of work hits them!

Also next week, all of Year 13 and Year 12 vocational learners have their PPEs. Once again, I ask that parents keep a close eye on children during examination periods and alert us to anyone who is experiencing unexpected stress that we can support with.

On Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> January, Bishop David will be visiting St Augustine's parish and he will say all of the Sunday Masses that day. The Bishop has been keen to see links between Church and the local schools on his recent visits to other parishes. Therefore, Fr Emmanuel wanted us to encourage any St Paul's students who are attending St Augustine's Masses this Sunday to wear their St Paul's uniform in order to represent themselves as a St Paul's student who attends St Augustine's parish.

Please can all Year 8 parents look out for letters regarding this year's options process. The Year 8 Options Information Evening will be on the 4<sup>th</sup> February.

Our car park is often busy with both vehicular and pedestrian traffic. Please ensure that you drive through the car park slowly and safely, paying particular attention to pedestrians.

I hope that you all have a lovely weekend.

Yours sincerely



Jo-Anne Hoarty  
Headteacher

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