

20th December 2024

Dear Families

As the Advent term draws to a close it is important to step back and reflect on what has been achieved this term. I have been incredibly proud of the children this term. They have managed to sustain their focus and the sense of community that we began the term with. I have witnessed determination and commitment in the vast majority of our pupils. It has been a pleasure to see. I have also been impressed with those pupils who perhaps had more of a tricky time last year and who have really turned it around. The pastoral team have been looking at behaviour ratios and statistics around visits to the reflection room for individual pupils. A significant list of students from across all year groups have vastly improved their behaviour this year and have sustained this all term. This is excellent news and I hope it continues into the Lent Term.

On Tuesday we had Red Bull Racing on site working with some of our Year 9 pupils. The STEMX team came in to work with pupils on forces, coding and the mathematics of Formula One. This is a new programme soon to be available in Milton Keynes and was an excellent opportunity for our pupils to be some of the first to experience this event. Red Bull Racing are working to increase a love of STEM based subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) in a bid to increase those entering STEM based careers. Our pupils had an excellent time on a range of activities that demonstrated how their school work can lead to many career opportunities in the future.

On Tuesday afternoon we welcomed Bishop David to the Emmanuel Centre to bless our new building. It was a lovely occasion and a real celebration of what has been achieved in creating our new centre. Later that evening we welcomed back former Sixth Form students to our KS5 Awards evening. It was lovely to see so many people join us to celebrate their achievements and to hear about what they have been up to this term. Today we have enjoyed wearing something Christmassy. There has been a lot of joy in school today!

Advent Charity fundraising has been going apace this week. Our Sixth formers have been organising 'Bags of Kindness' that were collected by Caritas yesterday. We managed to collect and arrange 45 bags in total and have additional bags of loose items to pass on as well. There will be some very happy people in our community this Christmas because of our pupils' generosity.

Congratulations to two of our musicians, Sophia Draper in 8 Elizabeth has passed her grade 3 cello exam and Noah Ng in 7 Vianney has passed grade 4 piano with distinction.

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Staff return on Friday 3rd January and have two staff training days. Pupils return to school on Tuesday 7th January. During the first week back we have lots happening. On the Tuesday our Year 7, 8 and 9 Arts Award students have a pottery workshop. Applications for our Sixth Form open on Wednesday 8th January. Please do encourage your children to get their applications in early. On Thursday evening the Governing Board's Admissions and Safeguarding Committee will be meeting. On Friday, Subject Leaders will all be attending our annual conference. This focuses on improvement planning for the year ahead. Then on Saturday our first ski trip will be leaving the UK for Italy. I am grateful to Mrs Bennett-Sulsh and Mr Burton who travelled last week to conduct a thorough risk assessment in advance of the trip. I am really looking forward to seeing all the pictures of our children on the slopes. I'm a little jealous of the staff going on this trip!

External Vocational examinations begin during the first week back and extend throughout January. Many members of our community are working hard to prepare for these.

As you complete any last minute Christmas preparations, and if you need any gift ideas for your children, a reminder of the pupil equipment list is below. All children are expected to come to school equipped with these items each day.

- Pen
- Pencil
- Pencil sharpener
- Ruler
- Rubber
- Scientific calculator
- Highlighter
- Fine tip dry wipe mini whiteboard pen
- Glue stick
- Reading book (can be from the library)
- Maths set (without compass)
- Colouring pencils/pens
- Pupil handbook
- Exercise books for the day
- Text books for the day
- Lanyard

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Finally, I wanted to end the final letter of 2024 with a heartfelt thank you to all members of our community. St. Paul's is such a special community and I thank you all for your support and commitment. It is a real pleasure to work in partnership with you for the good of your children. I wish you all a very happy and holy Christmas.

Yours sincerely



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