

8th November 2024

Dear Families

We welcomed children back to school on Monday and they have returned really well, continuing the focus and commitment demonstrated last half term. With the US Election taking place on Tuesday, many students were very interested in learning how the elections work in the States. A level Politics students organised and presented a workshop that was open to the whole school to explain the process to them. Kian, Thomas, and Lola from our Sixth Form presented the Electoral College System in a 45 minute workshop which ultimately reached over 100 students. They made the Politics department very proud not only because of their political IQ and grasp of US electoral processes, but also because they did this purely for academic purposes and to teach others. This follows beautifully our Catholic Social Teaching and really speaks to the Christian character of our students. We are very grateful to them for sharing their knowledge and passion for politics. The students who attended the workshop left with a working knowledge of the elections in the US and a map that they used to project a winner. Well done to all!

On Wednesday afternoon pupils attended auditions for our school show that takes place next year. We will be performing *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime*. All I can say at this stage is that we have some incredibly talented children in our school! I'm really looking forward to the development of the production over the next few weeks.

We had just one fixture this week. Our Year 9 girls' football team played Lord Grey and won 12 – 1. Congratulations to Seren Berry who scored seven of the goals and well done to the whole team for a great performance.

Year 11 pupils have performed incredibly well in their PPEs this week. They continue into next week too. We have also held external examinations for Post 16 GCSE courses this week.

This week I have been meeting with all subject leaders to review their curriculum. I have had some excellent conversations during this monitoring and evaluation, and I am very impressed by what is on offer throughout the curriculum at St. Paul's. I hope that you benefitted from the motivational Monday quotation that was sent this week. We aim to send a different one each Monday to help parents to encourage their children to develop excellent study habits. Initial feedback from parents has been very positive.

As part of our commitment to make Maths exciting and high profile in our school, we are taking part in a friendly competition involving schools in England. The competition runs from 7:30am on Tuesday 12th

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November 2024 to 7:30pm on Thursday 14th November 2024 and is all done online via play.ttrockstars.com.

Children can play in any game mode with every correct answer to a multiplication or division question, earning themselves, their class and the school a point. The Times Tables Rock Stars platform will calculate the class average (the number of correct answers per pupil in the class who play during the competition hours, subject to a daily 60 minute limit). Winning classes in the school, and in the competition as a whole, will be the ones with the highest average. Last year, one of our students, Raymond Asante, managed to achieve 4th place out of almost 380,000 participants.

To support player wellbeing each player can only earn competition points for up to 60 minutes each day on 12th, 13th and 14th November. Once the player goes beyond the daily limit, they will still earn coins but will no longer earn points towards the competition. In the spirit of the competition, please don't play on their behalf but encourage and support them to the extent that it doesn't cause high stress levels or impact on family plans.

On Monday next week we will be marking Remembrance Day with a short service and two minutes silence at 11am. Some of the pupils involved in making a poppy wreath for the Mayor will also be attending the civic ceremony that is being held at the MK Rose in Campbell Park. Next week is 'National Anti-Bullying week' with this year's theme being 'choose respect'. Throughout the week pupils will be reminded of the definition of bullying, types of bullying and effective methods to report any form of bullying, with a particular reference to our new whole school anti-bullying posters. On Tuesday we will be celebrating 'odd socks day' which is an opportunity to encourage pupils to express themselves and celebrate individuality. Staff and pupils are welcome to support this message by wearing odd socks on this day. During tutor time throughout the week, our student leaders will be discussing bullying further with their peers, promoting our whole school approach to tackling bullying. Finally, we will be sending out an anti-bullying parent/carer pack on Monday which provides you with information about bullying, tips about what to do if you are worried about bullying and the tools to talk to your children further about bullying.

On Tuesday evening Year 10 parents are invited to an information evening and all parents are invited to join the PTA for their meeting at 6pm. On Thursday, some Year 8 to 10 pupils will be taking part in a 'Women in Engineering' event offered by Niftylift in Milton Keynes.

I have had a few members of staff express concern about the nature of some emails that they are receiving from a minority of parents. Please can I ask you to be kind in your communication and think about how your point comes across to the reader. Everyone at St. Paul's works really hard for the good of your children. We do make mistakes, and we are happy for you to let us know in a kind and constructive way. We really want to work in partnership with you and we are on the same side – your child's. Thank you for your support with this.

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A reminder to parents to regularly check your children's social media and privacy settings to ensure that they are using social media considerately, appropriately and safely. There are several different types of parental control software available, and we would strongly advise their use if parents have concerns about their child's use of social media. Please do access the safeguarding page on our school website for further online safety advice which includes a variety of social media guides.

Also on the subject of safety, attached with this letter is a flyer from Thames Valley Police for some upcoming knife crime awareness training which is available to parents and carers. The online training is free and takes place on Tuesday 12th and Thursday 21st November.

I hope that you have a lovely weekend.

Yours sincerely



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