

10<sup>th</sup> May 2024

Dear Families

We have enjoyed the beautiful weather at St. Paul's this week. It really makes such a difference and I think it made a clear difference as Year 11 started their GCSE examinations on Thursday with their RE exam. There were lots of smiles afterwards and they seem confident.

On Tuesday evening our talented musicians held their Live Lounge performance and the Year 13 EPQ students showcased their projects. There were such a variety of excellent projects on display, they were so impressive. On Tuesday and Wednesday there were a number of university visits taking place so that our students could see the different pathways on offer to them Post 18. On Thursday we were unable to celebrate the Feast of the Ascension with whole school Mass due to the unavailability of priests. Time was spent reflecting and praying in tutor groups. We are also encouraging tutor groups to pray the rosary together during May. Year 9s had a lovely time on their retreat at Kintbury and Bronze Duke of Edinburgh practice has also been happening this week.

On Wednesday, unfortunately, we had two fire alarms go off. The first in the morning was a science experiment and the second was a false activation by a child. These resulted in GCSE speaking tests being disrupted and visits from the fire brigade on two occasions. We take false activations very seriously and sanction robustly for these. The disruption to learning and safety is significant.

Our students visited local charity MK Storehouse to deliver the many bags of clothing collected in our Great Spring Clean Out. Thank you to everyone who sent in donations and well done to our Student Council and Student Leaders for this initiative.

Next week is extremely busy. GCSE exams will be in full swing and Year 11 begin their formal study leave on Tuesday.

On Monday evening Governors will be holding their next Curriculum & Teaching committee meeting. On Tuesday evening I will be meeting Headteachers and Chairs of Governors from Milton Keynes Catholic Schools to discuss our partnership working. Year 13 have their leavers' assembly on Wednesday followed by the official start of their study leave next Friday. Also, next week I will be meeting with each subject leader and Year Leader to discuss the progress of children. This is part of our regular cycle of monitoring and evaluation and is an important part of how we strive to raise standards for our children.

I am a little concerned by the presentation of children at the moment. Please can I remind everyone that jumpers are optional and do not replace a blazer, which must be worn at all times unless it gets very hot and then permission will be given for them to be removed. I am also concerned by the length of some skirts which clearly breach our uniform policy. I appreciate that some might be a little above

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the knee at this time of year due to growth of children, but some are significantly in breach of the policy. Please be aware of our uniform expectations when purchasing new skirts for September. Do not listen to your child if they say 'it's fine, everyone has short skirts!' We are also spending considerable time addressing students who sneak their earrings back in after the morning uniform checks. Please can I ask you to remind your children of the rules and expectations. Thank you so much for your support with this.

A reminder that the next parent forum is scheduled for Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> May at 6pm. Our topic will be dual focused and will cover our study culture and the development of prayer and liturgy. Please sign up via [this link](#) .

It has been heartwarming to see the generous response to our prom appeal. Donations have been coming in steadily and we are very grateful to you. We really are a very supportive community.

We know that so many people around the world are in 'period poverty' and unfortunately an increasing number of our community are facing this same struggle. This week's community spotlight shines on our own school. All pupils are able to collect free period products for their own use or for family members if needed, they can do so discreetly from outside the medical room at breaks and lunches. We hope this can help alleviate some of the stress for our families.

A Day of Culture takes place on Friday 5th July and we have asked children to start thinking about what culture they would like to represent and get their outfits ready. This year we would like students to be involved in a fashion show and cultural dance performances. This may involve a few rehearsals after school. In addition, we would love to have cultural displays on tables for all to see. If parents would like to be involved in these cultural displays please get in touch with Mrs Ajala to see how we can make this possible. Our community is looking forward to an amazing day!

The diocesan youth ministry team, NYMO, is holding a summer event for children in Years 7 – 13. You can find out more on their website <https://nymo.org/d-summer/>

Have a lovely weekend.

Yours sincerely



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