

19th April 2024

Dear Families

I hope that you had a wonderful Easter. It has been lovely to welcome your children back to school this week. I hope that those who are preparing for examinations had a productive time over the Easter break.

No doubt you will have seen or heard about the incident in Milton Keynes shopping centre on the last day of the Lent Term. About 300 children from all schools in Milton Keynes were involved in a large gathering that was extremely unpleasant for all involved. On Tuesday morning Senior Leaders from the majority of schools met at St. Paul's with representatives from Thames Valley Police. The aim was to identify key individuals from all our schools and to plan a robust strategy to help prevent such things happening in the future. We have identified about 20 of our students who were in attendance and essentially witnesses to the event. No one has been identified as participating in anything beyond being present at the event. The police will be conducting home visits to many children and their families from across MK. St Paul's was named in many social media posts mostly because our purple blazers stand out and are easily identifiable in a sea of black blazers from other schools. I was disappointed that so many of our children chose to attend the gathering, not least because our school's reputation has been tarnished but most importantly because members of the public were left distressed and fearful and police resources were diverted away from critical incidents in MK whilst the police spent approximately two hours trying to disperse the large group. Heads from all schools in MK will be doing some intensive work with the police in the lead up to the next final day of term.

Attached to this letter is a copy of the Behaviour Charter that has been produced by Senior Leaders from all secondary schools in Milton Keynes. It outlines the consistency of expectations that all schools have when working for the good of your children. Please take time to review this and discuss with your child. The Behaviour Charter will also be displayed on our school website.

A-level Politics students alongside Student Leaders attended a conference on Human Rights and Responsibilities at Denbigh School just before the Easter holiday. The day started with a briefing about the UN's Declaration of Human Rights and how we are all entitled to unalienable rights. Next, they learned how these rights had been trampled on by the Nazis during WWII and why the mantra about genocide "never again" was born. Students quickly learned that "never again" did in fact happen again in Bosnia, Rwanda, and in the Sudan during the 1990s. Paul Salver, who is an ambassador for Remembering Srebrenica, gave this presentation to the students so they could understand the background of their next speaker, Safet Vulkalic BEM. He is survivor of the genocide in Bosnia. Mr Vulkalic shared his experience with the children which they found very emotional, especially as he went through it as a teenager very near to their age. The students were so moved that they gathered around

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him at break to let him know how he had inspired them with his story. He was moved to tears by their comments and so impressed with our students that he posed for a picture with them. The afternoon session concluded with hope for the future. Students were shown some ideas of how they can get involved in MK to make the mantra “never again” a reality. Students also came up with some of their own ideas such as to host an assembly at the school, to use social media to spread kindness, and to work with local charities such as Welcome MK. Finally, students were addressed by some distinguished guests such as the Mayor of MK, Mick Legg, and local MP Ben Everitt about the importance of their work going forward. Students will meet this term as a group to move forward enthusiastically with this initiative. They were very inspired to be a part of a hopeful future that truly lies in their hands.

During the Easter holidays, Ms Markatos spent a day at Argo Community High School, just outside Chicago to speak to their Social Studies and English staff about assessment and curriculum in the UK. Ms Markatos’ brother is an Advanced Placement Economics teacher at this school and arranged the visit. The American staff were very eager to learn about the ‘St. Paul’s Way’ and had many questions and positive comments about the UK education system. At the end of the meeting, talks began about making plans for our schools to work together on a more regular basis. Currently, the students in both schools do an online Mock UN through the A level Politics course, but we are working towards joining forces through the Student Councils on community projects as well as academically through competitions on the study of US History. We will keep you posted on the new and exciting international projects as they develop, and we are very pleased to be forging stronger relationships with schools across the pond.

Congratulations to Finley Berry who has passed his grade 1 drum exam with merit.

This week Year 7 & 8 have enjoyed a retreat visit to Kintbury, Year 10 Duke of Edinburgh Silver students have been on an expedition to the Dunstable Downs. On Thursday we welcomed MK Rock School. Students from Year 7 – 10 enjoyed singing along as well as watching the music tutors and musicians perform rock songs from different genres. Students were engaged and inspired with many enquiring how to sign up to the Rock School. If students are interested in attending or trialling the Rock School, please speak to Miss McLernon in the Music department. Last night our STEM lecture by Ralph Oakley was very engaging. GCSE Art exams have started this week and continue into next week too.

Next week Year 11 GCSE MFL speaking examinations begin. The children have been thoroughly prepared so they just need to try their best and demonstrate what they know. Year 12 Level 2 students are out on their work experience next week and the PTA are meeting on Tuesday evening. Governors are in school for their next visit on Thursday morning focusing on Teaching & Learning. On Thursday evening years 7, 8 10 & 12 have the first mentoring evening, with the second on the evening of Monday 29th April. Please note that because of mentoring on Monday the 29th April the school site will not be secure from 4pm onwards as parents will be on site from this time to attend mentoring appointments for their children. The library will remain open and staffed as usual.

Congratulations to all those who represented the school in sporting events this week. The Sixth Form basketball team won silver medals in the MK Basketball District finals. They represented the school very well and did the best that was possible. Our Year 9 and 10 girls’ football team travelled to Bishop Stortford to play in the fourth round of the U15 National Cup. The game finished 3-3 meaning they had to do another 20 minutes of extra time. We were by far the stronger, fitter team and dominated

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both periods of extra time but just couldn't find that winning goal, which meant we had to go to a penalty shootout where we lost by 3-1. It has been a pleasure for the PE Department to be working with the girls and witnessing their journey through the cup first hand. We have never had a girl's football team enter the national cup let alone reach the last 32 in the country! It's a fantastic achievement.

A reminder that Friday 26th April is non uniform day as we start fundraising for our Pentecost Term charities. The usual jewellery rules will apply. Please remember to bring in your £1 contribution.

This afternoon I have had a delightful afternoon tea with some of our excellent students to celebrate their commitment to our school mission. It has been a joyous afternoon!

Following enquiries from some families we are doing a short survey to ascertain potential demand for a collective approach for school transport to and from the Brooklands and Broughton area. We must stress that, at this stage, we are just gathering information to enable us to ascertain demand. There are no guarantees that we can provide any bus service as there would have to be significant numbers to enable this to happen. If you are a Brooklands or Broughton resident and might benefit from a bus service please fill in this online form to register your interest. You can find the form [here](#).

This week we offer this link as a potential source of support for members of our community who are facing challenges with the cost-of-living crisis. This free and easy-to-use Benefits Calculator tool can help you check what you might be able to claim or apply for. This Benefits Calculator is supplied by [Turn2us](#), a free, independent charity which helps people access the money available to them – through welfare benefits, grants and other help. <https://www.trusselltrust.org/get-help/benefits-calculator/>

The PTA have asked if anyone has any secondhand blazers, in good wearable condition, that can be donated to the school. We're particularly short of boys' blazers.

Finally, we're delighted to have received nominations in two categories of the MK Inspiration Awards, one for Inspiring Secondary School and one for Inspiring Teacher for Ms Markatos. Voting takes place online and you can cast your vote [here](#).

I hope you have a lovely weekend.

Yours sincerely



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