

21st June 2024

Dear Families

It has been an excellent week here at St. Paul's probably helped by a little bit of sunshine, finally! We were delighted to watch former student Kevin Danso play for Austria against France in the Euros. He was marking Killian Mbappe. It was lovely to see someone on the pitch excelling in their sport at such an elite level. I have had several members of staff telling me that his success was as a direct result of their teaching of him! PE I can understand, but his RE teacher insists it was all down to the high quality of the RE curriculum!

We have had several educational and enrichment visits this week. On Monday all Year 12 students visited the University of Bedfordshire for a UCAS Event. Year 9 & 10 Emmaus students went to Climb Quest on Tuesday, Year 10 Animal Care students went to Woad Farm on Wednesday and the Chaplaincy & Pastoral team took students to The Life of Christ at Wintershall on Wednesday. On Tuesday evening, parents of those students who are planning to attend the expedition to Peru attended an information evening. It sounds a fabulous opportunity.

On Monday the pastoral leadership team who will be attached to our new Year 7 met together to allocate students to their tutor group. This is a very lengthy and strategic process as there are many factors to consider when allocating them. We try to consider information from primary schools, friendships, geographical locations as well as ensuring a balanced mix and diversity.

Two days running a stunt plane was circling the school and yesterday it drew a smiley face in the sky above us. Students and staff were captivated to see this. I hope you saw the pictures on our social media.

Today I am at our annual Leadership Group strategic conference where we are concentrating on planning the strategic direction for the year ahead. I am grateful to middle leaders who have supported the smooth running of the school today in our absence. Also today, Ms Markatos has organised another opportunity for our students to engage with a member of the House of Lords, this time Lord Knight of Weymouth. Students had the fantastic opportunity to ask questions and make key points.

Next week is extremely busy. On Monday the RE Department is holding their annual Faith in Action Day. Schools from across the Diocese are invited to join us to reflect on our faith. The RE Department are taking Year 7 on a visit to the Sikh Gurdwara on Tuesday and Thursday next week as part of their curriculum learning on other religions. On Wednesday we have a special event for some of our student leaders. We have a guest speaker, Paul Salver, coming in to speak to them about Srebrenica and the genocide that occurred there. The aim is to help our students understand its importance. He will also discuss why it is crucial for them to learn to stand up for human rights. I am also pleased to tell you

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that the Mayor of Milton Keynes will be joining us for this event. On Thursday the RE department are taking a group of children to the important Pilgrimage site of Walsingham which is important considering the Bishop's focus on Pilgrimage this year. Also on Thursday we will be welcoming our Catholic primary schools for their sports day on our field.

Next Friday is a very important day for our school. It is our feast day – the Feast of Saints Peter & Paul. We will be marking this by having a whole school Mass. We have also invited in many of the Alumni of St. Paul's to gather together, to look at the changes that have occurred in our school and to discuss how they can become more involved in the life of our school. I'm really looking forward to this.

On Wednesday evening we have our annual KS4 Awards evening. Our guest speaker is Andy Halliday. For Andy, the opportunity to manage the GB Men's Olympic hockey team in 2012 was the pinnacle of an enthralling journey. After a career spanning three decades policing London and balancing the demands of international sport, he is able to reflect on a wealth of experience at the sharp end of life. I am looking forward to listening to his inspirational ideas. On Thursday evening Governors will be meeting for the Resources & Personnel committee.

We're sharing with you an appeal from our colleagues at WorkTree who are helping Year 10 students to get their first job this summer. WorkTree's 'First job' project connects young people aged 14-15 with real work opportunities to further their development and prepare them for the working world. With more teenagers than ever having no experience of paid work, have we inadvertently removed a vital rite of passage to productive adulthood? WorkTree are running a pilot test of First Job in Summer 2024 for young people aged 14-15 and are currently gathering and approving job listings from employers in Milton Keynes. Do you know of a company that could benefit from employing a young person? Can you help connect WorkTree with opportunities for young people this summer? If this is something that you think could work for your business, or one you are connected with, see www.worktree.org/first-job and contact their CEO Tom Bulman, tom.bulman@worktree.org, tel 07962 838685.

Milton Keynes Rugby Club in Emerson Valley are holding a Give Rugby a Try Day this Sunday 30th June from 10am – 12pm. The day is for 5 – 16 year olds and there will be men's and women's touch games, fun activities, a BBQ and refreshments. There will be support from the Premiership Champions Northampton Saints as well as The Rugby Football Union.

The PTA are grateful to everyone who has donated Year 11 uniform so far. They are still happy to take donations, and are especially in need of boys' blazers. Donations can be dropped in at the school office and there will also be a collection point on results day.

For our community focus we wanted to raise awareness of the Holiday Activities and Food Programme which is a range of free activities and food for children, young people and their families who are in receipt of benefit related Free School Meals to access from 29 July to 22 August. You can find information about this programme here <https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/children-young-people-and-families/holiday-activities-and-food-programme-2024>

As you can see, there is so much happening at the moment!

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I hope you have a lovely weekend

Yours sincerely



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