

9th February 2024

Dear Families

This week I would like to start by celebrating our excellent careers offer here at St. Paul's. We have reached an amazing number of pupils with the activities we have organised since Christmas. Over half the school will have had at least one meaningful encounter with careers and employers this half term. These include:

- Year 10 – Work Experience, Speed dating event, Work Experience reviews, RAF visit
- Year 8 – Speed dating event
- Year 9 - Get that Job and university visits
- Year 12/13 – Digital apprenticeship talk, Get that Apprenticeship.

We will continue with this excellent programme during the course of the year. I want to thank our careers team for all that they do to provide our children with these rich experiences.

We had our kick off mentoring session with Fresh Youth Mk last Friday. We had a very good turn out and the students enjoyed starting the programme. They will be matched with suitable mentors before the next session based on the information they have provided about themselves. Fresh Youth MK provides one to one mentoring and empowerment sessions to young people aged 16-24 in Milton Keynes.

This week we have completed Year 11 mentoring appointments. I hope that you found these helpful in the final preparation for GCSEs in the Summer. On Tuesday evening we also held an Options evening for Year 8 parents to introduce the guided options process. Thank you to all those who joined us. This will be followed with individual meetings with a senior member of staff after half term.

On Thursday we took 20 pupils to Bletchley Park, an event run in partnership between Bletchley Park, FCDO Services (Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office), HMGCC (His Majesty's Government Communications Centre) and UK NACE (National Authority for Counter Eavesdropping). These companies are all based a short distance north of Milton Keynes at Hanslope Park. Pupils had the opportunity to work with these employers and find out about jobs and apprenticeships in the real world. A big thank you to all pupils that took part in both STEM events this week, they represented the school well and behaviour was outstanding.

Next week we are very excited to put on our school play – The Wizard of Oz. Please buy your tickets via Wisepay and enjoy our show! Everyone has worked so hard and it will be lovely to watch such talent on stage. On Wednesday we will be marking Ash Wednesday with Mass with Fr Francis and Communion and Liturgy of Word On Ash Wednesday we are asked to fast and so our canteen will be

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meat free that day – just like it is every Friday. This marks the start of Lent and our Lenten charity fundraising events. We start this with a non-uniform day on Thursday 15th February. Children should bring in £1.00 for year group charities and normal jewellery rules apply. Our Year Group charities are varied but include MKAct, Young Minds and the NSPCC.

Congratulations to all those who represented the school in sporting fixtures this week. Our Year 8 Basketball Team competed in the district tournament on Monday. They competed well, however, they were up against some excellent teams so didn't make it through to the next round. Today Year 8 are playing in the Junior NBA tournament at Watling School, we wish them luck for the tournament. On Tuesday the Year 8 girls' football team had their MK tournament held at Walton High. They performed really well and finished third overall. The Year 8 rugby team played in a tournament at Stowe School on Wednesday and won two, drew two and lost two. On Thursday our Year 8 girls' football team played at home against Walton High and lost in a very competitive game. Also on Thursday, our Year 10s and 11s played Shenley Brook End in basketball with Year 10 winning 33-5 and our Year 11 losing 19-23.

Over the last two evenings, we have been able to take a number of pupils from our Emmaus Department to play in an inclusive football fixture against Radcliffe School. On Tuesday evening, we had our Year 7 & 8 pupils playing. Year 8 won both of their games, and Year 7 lost one and won one. We then put our Year 7s and 8s together to play a game against Radcliffe's Year 7s and 8s which we won 1-0. On Wednesday Year 9 and 10 played a 20 minute combined game against Radcliffe, They went 2-0 down but they never gave up and the game finished 2-2. Congratulations to all involved.

I have been looking at how we can make some changes to our lunchtime arrangements so that all children can have access to a canteen and the muga to play sports at lunchtime. I am keen to retain our Year Group social zones as this has resulted in a much calmer and safer school environment which has benefitted everyone. From September we will move to a timetable arrangement where there are three lunchtimes rather than the current two. At breaktimes students will remain in their social zones and snacks will be served from the food huts. At lunchtime, each year group will be out at lunch together and will be served from one of the canteens and have access to one of the mugas. Year groups will not be mixed to maintain the integrity of the year group social zone principle. It is hoped that this new arrangement will benefit everyone and will allow us to concentrate duty staff to a smaller area, as well as to give children the ability to eat inside and play sports throughout lunchtime if they wish. We will be relaunching our canteen provision at the same time as this. We will build in a longer travel time between lessons in the afternoon to allow for comfort breaks where needed. I'm sure that children will be very pleased with this announcement!

When we have parents' information evenings or events in the evening at school, we do not have the capacity to supervise your children in the time between the library closing and the event starting. There is nowhere in school for them to wait. Please can I ask you to ensure that your child is adequately supervised at this time. Our reception area closes at 5.30pm and there is no one there to supervise so children cannot wait inside. Last night our receptionist had to leave school very late as she had to look after children as parents did not come to collect until 6pm. Thank you for your support with this.

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Now some information as part of our initiative to raise awareness of support and advice in the community. [Too Good To Go](#) is an app- based service that aims to reduce food waste by offering 'surprise bags' at a reduced price from retailers and food businesses in your area. Although you won't know what's in your bag until after you've bought it, the goods will be offered at half price or less and will help your pocket while also helping the planet. On the app you can see which shops and restaurants have bags on offer and can see the price so you can select a business and price that is right for you. This app has been recommended by several of our staff at St Paul's, please remember to let us know of any services you think we should shine a light on in the future.

Finally, we break up for half term next Friday on the 16th February.

Have a lovely weekend.

Yours sincerely



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