



All Saints RC Secondary School

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Head Teacher
Mr Brian McDermott

Wednesday, 20th December 2023

Dear Parent/Carer,

I hope my letter finds you and yours well.

We finish this Friday at 2:30pm for the Christmas holidays, after a very busy and successful term. School returns for everyone from **8:50am on Monday, 8th of January 2024**.

S4-S6 Prelim Results

Young people in S4, S5 and S6 will receive their prelim exams results certificate on the first working day of week beginning 15th of January 2024.

I will meet with Year Heads and Subject Leaders in early January to review the prelim results and to begin the processes around confirmation of SQA presentation levels – this is normally confirmed by late February and communicated to the SQA in March.

Our young people will begin to receive focused feedback to support their learning from the first week of the new term (whole-class feedback) and from prelim results day onwards (individual/targeted feedback as applicable).

Please contact your child's Pupil Support Teacher if you wish to discuss your child's progress. We are happy to help.

School Uniform

We have worked so hard as a school community, supported by our Parent Council and by all parents and carers, to make huge improvements to the standards of uniform in our school. The improvement has been tremendous but we can do more to ensure 100% consistency.

I appreciate that the cost of living crisis places demands on everyone at present – school uniform helps to mitigate some of these challenges. I know I refer to this often – this is because I feel and can see every day that it is a significant part of our school ethos and it helps to make our school safer and more equitable.

A reminder that branded jumpers, hoodies, sports leggings and coloured trainers are not part of our school uniform. Should anyone need assistance with aspects of school uniform, please get in touch. We can and will help. If young people arrive in school out of uniform, we are able to provide all aspects of uniform for them to change into – this is easy to address and not an issue. We are happy to help.

Mobile Phones in School

You will have noticed recent dialogue in the national press around the impact of mobile phones in schools. The National Discussion on Behaviour in Schools, recently published, also refers to the issues mobile phone use in schools can cause.

In All Saints' we have also noted that young people's concentration span is impacted by phones – with constant checking and re-checking detracting from their ability to transfer knowledge from working into long-term memory and impacting on their ability to complete tasks and follow instructions; their focus often interrupted by social media use and receiving various notifications; we've also had incidences where parents have phoned their child during lessons – the impact of this on learning in the classroom is hugely detrimental.

Pupils often ask out of classes to use the toilet but then miss longer periods of learning than necessary due to phone use; there are also issues around cyber bullying and pupils' inability to distance themselves from peer groups due to the constant use of phones. A lot of learning time is wasted in back-and-forth around phone use. None of this is positive or necessary.

Whilst there is dialogue nationally about potentially banning mobile phones from schools, we have not decided, as things stand, to take that position in All Saints'. **But this is under review.** Young people are instructed not to use their phones during lessons in All Saints' but this is having mixed success and we have to think about it carefully.

As such, and as an interim measure, we have tightened our mobile phone policy to include provision for young people's phones to be **temporarily** given to their class teacher (pupils are currently deciding on the name of the 'box' – but 'phone dungeon' is currently most popular) if they are (a) are found to be using their phone during lessons and/or (b) they are asking to leave their classes to go to the toilet during lessons. We hope that this interim measure deters pupils from using their phones and hindering learning in the ways we are currently seeing. We will start this in the New Year and will review after a few weeks to see if there has been impact.

Ultimately – young people are in classes to learn. If mobile phones are becoming a significant issue and detracting from learning, we need to do something about it. More to follow on this in the New Year.

End of Term Newsletter

You will receive a link to our end of term newsletter later this week; as before, this has been created using Microsoft *Sway* – there have been millions of things happening across our school this term and this will be a snapshot of what’s been going on.

I hope you enjoy it!

Staffing: Retirement

Mr Waugh – currently Principal Teacher of Modern Languages – is retiring from his post at the end of term. We wish him a long and happy retirement and thank him for his years of service to the All Saints’ Learning Community. A new Principal Teacher of Modern Languages has been appointed already and will start in All Saints’ in late January/early February 2024.

I would like to thank you for your continued support throughout this session. Our young people have been outstanding. This doesn’t happen without you – so thank you!

I wish you and your families a wonderful Christmas, and a safe, healthy and happy New Year.

As always, please don’t hesitate to get in touch should you wish to discuss any aspect of your child’s learning or wellbeing. We are always happy to help.

Kind regards and Merry Christmas,

Brian McDermott
Head Teacher
All Saints’ RC Secondary