

Oaklands Catholic School and Sixth Form College

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Edith Stein Catholic Academy Trust
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Headteacher: Matthew Quinn B.Ed (Hons), M.A., NPQH

Our Ref: MQ/SM

24th May 2024

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we reach the half-way point in the summer term, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate our Year 11 and Year 13 students on the fantastic start they have made with their exams. They have behaved responsibly in accordance with the exam regulations and are dedicating large amounts of time to revision, even attending breakfast sessions.

The exam season continues for another few weeks after the Whitsun break, all our exam students need to take time to rest over half term but keep up the hard work – it will be worth it! As Year 11 move towards the end of their exams, it is time for Year 10 to step-up and become the role models for the other year groups. They too will have end of year exams in the Hall later in the term. Year 7 also have their Assessment Week starting Monday 3rd June. Following the exams, my team will analyse the outcomes; this may result in us inviting some Year 10 students and their parents to meet with us to explore additional support measures if these are felt necessary.

I apologise for the length of this letter, however there are several important reminders and new information I must share with you.

Outstanding Items

I am aware that some students in Year 11 and Year 13 may not yet have handed back their textbooks or library books. Please can you ensure your children return these to school as soon as possible. I would also be most grateful if you could also ensure that catering fobs are returned, and all outstanding debts settled. Thank you.

Alumni

There are many ways in which former students can enrich the life of the school and we, therefore, strongly encourage those students leaving the school to keep in touch. We are being helped by a national charity called Future First to find and reconnect with former students that have left over the years. They offer opportunities when students leave school to build confidence, skills and their CV. Alumni will receive a few emails a year sharing news and opportunities to get involved.

Please do watch and share [this video](#) with your child to see why former students around the country are joining their old school or college's alumni network. It takes two minutes to sign up, so if your child has not already joined at school, please [click here](#), and make sure they use their own email address, not their school/college email. Older siblings may also want to join, if they are not already enrolled.

KS3 into KS4 Induction (Year 9), Thursday 13th June at 6.00pm

The KS4 Transition Evening is an important event that all Year 9 parents are strongly advised to attend. In addition to the important curriculum information about the GCSEs, we will be talking to you all about work experience for students in the summer of 2025. We have written to Year 9 parents with more detail via separate letter, a copy of which can be found on the school website via this link, [Key Stage 4 Induction Evening Letter](#).

Uniform

I wrote to all parents on 28th March about uniform, particularly the length of student skirts, a copy of which can be found via this link, [End of Spring Term Headteacher's Letter to Parents](#).

Whilst there have been some improvements there are still too many students arriving to school wearing uniform in an inappropriate manner. Whilst we appreciate that all students wish to develop their own identity and character, we are concerned that some students' modesty, self-esteem and pride is being undermined by the uniform choices they are making. Short or rolled up skirts are not considered appropriate for school and could potentially lead to safeguarding issues outside of school. Therefore, can I please urge all parents and carers to ensure students are wearing skirts that accord with the Governors School Uniform Policy, which reads: '*Navy stitched down pleated skirt (knee length)*'. After half term we will be writing to parents and sanctioning students who continually flout the Governors' uniform regulations.

This half term we have accumulated a significant amount of lost property, the clothes rail contains over 40 blazers coats and jackets with replacement cost to parents of over £1,000. We are also holding multiple pairs of shoes and items of PE kit. Please can you ensure all your child's belongings are named. If they have lost an item this term, please encourage them to go to Student Services to search through lost property.

Student Leadership

We now have a new student leadership team headed up by Larisa Antemir and Emily Bray; their team of students are responsible for various aspects of school life. I would also like to acknowledge the work of the outgoing leaders Leona Newman and Nadia Norman - their contribution can be seen in the legacy the new team inherit.

Curriculum After Half Term

After half-term, the timetable will change to allow Year 9 to begin their GCSE option courses. All students have been issued with both a new lesson timetable in readiness for these changes. New homework timetables will be issued after half term, if necessary.

Challenge Week, 24th – 27th June

Mr Bamford sent out information about Challenge Week for Year 7-9 students. The information booklets that were sent out can be found on the school website by following [this link](#).

Fundraising Friday, 28th June

Once every three years we devote a day for all for Key Stage 3 to raise money for good causes, this will occur at the end of Challenge Week, on Friday 28th June. We are encouraging every student to raise £10 if they can. More information will be provided directly from Mr Bamford as a ClassCharts announcement. The Sixth Form is also planning a 'Sleep Out, to Help Out' event in the school in support of homeless charities.

Year 10 Events in the Final Half Term

The final half-term will be very busy for Year 10 with their Professional Day occurring on the 17th June and the moving into internal examinations. A separate letter was sent to parents about this, a copy of which can also be found following this link, [Year 10 Events, May-July 2024](#). From Monday 1st July to Friday 5th July, Year 10 will be out of school on their Work Experience week.

Oaklands Friends and Parents' Association (OFPA)

Can you spare a few hours a month to help the OFPA support the school community?

If your answer is yes, potentially, or even maybe, then you have three options – you could join the OFPA, join the A-Team or even be part of both!

The A-Team help on an adhoc basis at key school events such as Parents' Evenings, School Concerts, the School Show etc, serving refreshments from the kitchenette, and holding 50:50 raffles. Volunteers are needed to join this important team - you can help as much or as little at any event you can.

The OFPA are also a group of volunteers who commit to meet once a month during term time, to support the school community in a more formalised way. They plan and host events for the community, run fundraising events, and are also responsible for the secondhand school uniform store.

If you would like to find out more or would like to join either of the group of volunteers, please email opa@oaklandscatholicsschool.org and they will be back in touch with you.

Thank you in advance for any support you can give.

Canteen and Food in School

Over the course of this year the footfall in the canteen has increased significantly. Due to the increased volume of sales, we have been able to keep any increase in costs to a minimum, despite significant variations in wholesale food prices. We will continue to review costs over the next period along with the service we provide. Sadly, we are aware that a small number of students have taken food without paying for it. When this occurs, access to the canteen for them will be withdrawn for a period.

The school is alive to an escalating hunger crisis among children in families who live in poverty but are not eligible for free school meals. If your family is suffering from particular hardship, please do contact us so that we can help signpost support services.

Toilets

It is frustrating that there are still a small number of students who continually abuse the toilet facilities within the school, including damage to sanitary ware, doors and locks, graffiti and flushing items down the toilets which cause blockages. These are all expensive and labour intensive to fix. Over the past few years, a lot of money has been spent on refurbishing all the student toilets across the school, so I would be grateful if you could please talk to your children about respecting their surroundings and the facilities that are provided for their comfort.

End of Summer Term

The final day for students in school will be Thursday 18th July. Staff will be in school the following day undertaking training.

Term Dates for 2024-2025

Dates for next academic year can be found on our website following this link, [Term Dates 2024-25](#).

Have a good Whitsun holiday when it arrives and thank you for your continued prayers and support.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mr M Quinn', with a horizontal line underneath.

Mr M Quinn
Headteacher