

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

28 March 2024

Dear Parents and Carers

As we reach the end of term, I would like to take the opportunity to revisit a number of school rules, routines and procedures. It would be helpful if you could reinforce the student related elements to your child. Towards the end of this letter I will provide an update to the building work being completed on site.

Uniform

Uniform is an important part of a school's identity. It reinforces who we are as a community and helps allow students to feel pride in their school. It also helps prepare students for life after school where many will have to dress smartly for work. Uniform also helps members of the wider community form a positive impression of our school and the students who attend. Over the term, I have been very impressed with the vast majority of students who wear their uniform correctly, with pride and look very smart. Thank you to all the parents and carers who have worked with the school by ensuring that their child leaves home correctly dressed or by providing us with a note if there are any problems with uniform.

However, there are two issues that require attention, the first relates to the length of students' skirts. This is a sensitive issue; I am aware that an increasing number of schools have moved towards business-like trousers for all students as this is easier to regulate. A number of teachers have commented that an increasing number of students are wearing their skirts so short that they find it difficult to sit on a chair correctly, walk-up stairs, pick something up off the floor or engage in practical subjects without compromising their dignity.

Whilst we appreciate that all youngsters 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, it reads, '*Navy stitched down pleated skirt (knee length)*'.

The second issue is related to non-uniform shoes. The number of foot-related issues that results in students not being able to wear uniform regulation shoes has increased almost in epidemic proportion. Where this is the case, many students are then attending school with highly stylised trainers, boots or non-regulation footwear, often these fashion items are considerably more expensive than school shoes. If your child has outgrown their school shoes or they are broken, the Easter break provides an opportunity to purchase replacements.

Students who persistently wear uniform incorrectly will be sanctioned.

School uniform can be expensive, so if you are struggling with the cost of uniform, please contact us and we can signpost you to support services. Our OFPA also run a preloved uniform shop. Details can be found on the website, [Second Hand Uniform - Oaklands Catholic School and Sixth Form College](#).

If your child has lost an item of uniform, it may be in lost property. This year we have collected hundreds of items with a replacement value running into thousands of pounds. Sadly, none of these lost items are named. Please can you ensure your child's uniform items are named and identifiable so they can be returned.

Attendance and Punctuality

Our attendance figures are amongst the highest in the local area, well done for this. The link between good attendance in school and success is well defined. I would also like to thank all students who make every effort to be in school on time and ready for muster. I strongly believe that being punctual to school prepares all students for the day ahead and is good training for life. Thank you to all the parents and carers who continue to support this. Since Christmas there has been a noticeable build-up of traffic along Stakes Hill Road affecting punctuality. If you drop your child by car, an earlier start is advisable. School begins at 8.50am and any pupil arriving after this time is technically late. You can view your child's punctuality record on ClassCharts alongside rewards and sanctions for punctuality.

Behaviour

In recent weeks there have been a number of reports in educational press and national publications about poor behaviour in schools, both primary and secondary, including an increase in non-compliance. I would like to reassure you that the vast majority of children at Oaklands know and do make positive behavioural choices; they are a credit to the school and their families. When children make poor choices, action will be taken. If there is a serious breach of the Governors' Behaviour Policy and we believe that keeping the student in school has a significant impact on the rest of the community, then their position at Oaklands will be in jeopardy.

We have experienced a few issues this academic year where parents and students knew that poor behaviour choices were being made, because of information being exchanged outside of school, yet they did nothing. This then resulted in a challenging situation for staff to manage. If you are aware that friction is developing between your child and another, informing us helps keep your child safe.

Finally related to behaviour, we have updated our [parent engagement advice and procedures](#), this has been necessary due to an increasing number of parents coming to Reception and demanding that confiscated items be returned during the day. If your child has their phone confiscated it will be handed back to them at the end of the day and not before.

Building Work and Access to Reception

We are in the process of upgrading our ancient heating infrastructure in school. The work in Kolbe Block (Science) is now complete and during the Easter break, the contractor moves into the White House. From Wednesday 17th April, our Reception will be moved to the side entrance to the right of the White House. Unfortunately, this does not include a waiting area for visitors. Please can parents therefore keep visits to school to a minimum, only attending pre-arranged appointments.

I am very conscious that this letter has focussed on rules, routines and procedures. Alongside this letter I have published the Oaklands News, there are many articles that exemplify that are students are great ambassadors, making parents and the school very proud.

I would like to thank parents and carers for the kindness and support you have given school and individual staff. I wish you all a wonderful Easter break.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matthew Quinn', written in a cursive style.

Mr M Quinn
Headteacher