

# Oaklands Catholic School and Sixth Form College

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**Headteacher:** Matthew Quinn B.Ed (Hons), M.A., NPQH

Our Ref: MQ/SM

29 August 2024

Dear Parents and Carers

I hope you are all well and have managed to have a good summer break. It hardly seems possible that school will return next week. I have put a reminder of the published start dates for each year group at the end of this letter.

We saw some outstanding public exam results this year, with the greatest number of students ever going on to study medicine or veterinary science, underlining the strength of STEM subjects. More about examination success at GCSE and A level will be featured in the first edition of the Oaklands News.

We want to start the school year as we mean to go on, so a few reminders before we start back are timely. At the end of this letter I have also included a FAQ section related to transport. If you or a member of your family collects a student by car, regularly or occasionally, it is important that you read this information.

## 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 youngsters 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.

Thank you to all the parents and carers who, last year, worked with the school ensuring that their child leaves home correctly dressed. There are only a few days left to resolve any outstanding issues.

Last year I wrote to all parents expressing concerns 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 uniform policy also provides information on our expectations for facial piercings, makeup and hair styles. It is important that students return next week in adherence with the policy. Please follow [this link](#) to our website if you require further guidance.

Coloured enamel year badges are a uniform item and should be worn on your child's blazer. Students in Years 8-11 were issued with one of these last September and, if it is in good condition, should continue to wear it. We will replace any missing badges and issue Year 7 with new ones in September. Thereafter a lost badge will need to be replaced at a cost; we would therefore encourage students to look after their badge and avoid the need for replacement as this is a cheaper, more sustainable option.

Our uniform policy is available on the website with information about the supply of preloved uniform available from the Oaklands Friends' and Parents' Association (OFPA).

The OFPA welcome any good quality, clean uniform which can be donated for re-sale. This can be handed into our Reception at the White House or sent in with your child to Student Services. Details of the next uniform sale will be published in Oaklands News.

### **Lost Property**

Over the holiday I was astounded when I saw the volume of lost property we had accumulated over the year, all of it unnamed; the replacement value of this for parents will have been many thousands of pounds. Time spent before students return naming items can save parents money in the long term.

### **Attendance and Punctuality**

Our attendance figures last year were amongst the highest in the local area, well done for this. However, attendance has not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels; there is still more work to be done, so we must not be complacent. The link between good attendance in school and success is well defined. I strongly believe that being punctual to school prepares all students for the day ahead and is good training for life. School begins at 8.50am and any pupil arriving after this time is technically late. More information about absence, attendance and punctuality can be found on the school website.

### **School Equipment**

Please can you ensure that your child has all the necessary equipment for learning including a suitable pencil case and calculator. All students should have a reading book, this can be brought in from home or borrowed from the school library.

### **National Events over the Summer**

As youngsters begin preparing for a return to school, there will likely be questions, concerns and debates about what happened during the holidays. I am sure all of you were as shocked as I was over the scenes of civil unrest across the country - not least because of the involvement of young people, with some as young as 12 being arrested, making them the youngest people to be convicted of violent disorder in connection with the disorder. Much of what was reported was as a result of extremists whose sole aim is to create fear, division and chaos. Make no mistake, these are not protests or free speech, they are acts of violence perpetrated by individuals, in an attempt to fan the flames of division.

It has never been a more important time to assure you that racism, extremism or prejudicial behaviour will not be tolerated, and any student involved in such activity cannot continue in the Oaklands School Community. As a school, we will continue demonstrating unwavering commitment to those who are marginalised.

## Start Dates

Date	Event
Monday 2 <sup>nd</sup> September 2024	INSET (Staff only)
Tuesday 3 <sup>rd</sup> September 2024	INSET (Staff only)
Wednesday 4 <sup>th</sup> September 2024	Year 7 and Year 12 only
Thursday 5 <sup>th</sup> September 2024	All Students to return

I would like to thank parents and carers for the prayers, kindness and support you gave school and individual staff at the end of term. I look forward to welcoming students back and working towards another successful year.

Yours sincerely



Mr M Quinn  
**Headteacher**

## **Transport Related FAQs**

### **Where do I drop my child off in the morning?**

Children should be dropped off on the school drive by the bus shelters. Please note that this is a 'drop off' area only as access is required by buses and other parents. Please only use the visitors' car parks if you have an appointment or need to visit Reception. No parking is permitted in other areas of the school.

### **What time do students finish?**

At the end of the day, the dismissal of Key Stages will be staggered (KS3 at 3.25pm, KS4 and KS5 at 3.30pm). Students will be escorted down the drive by their class teachers. Students will need to leave the school site as soon as their day ends in order to clear the buildings. Students should go straight home. Key Stage 3 students will be permitted to board buses as soon as they arrive. In the event of bad weather and a known delay to buses, students will be given the option of waiting in the Hall.

### **What time are the school gates open?**

The school gates will not open until 3.50pm, as the buses need to vacate the drive. Please do not try to park in front of the school gate before 3.50pm as you could obstruct buses that are trying to enter the site.

### **What time do the buses arrive?**

The buses should be on site by 3.20pm ready for the first students. If a bus is late, the school will contact the bus company.

### **If I am collecting my child by car where do I pick them up from?**

You will drive on to the school site at 3.50pm (no earlier), around the roundabout then back down the drive. The pick-up point is on the playing field side of the drive. Parents must not stop on the bus shelter side of the driveway or on the roundabout.

### **Where can I park locally to wait for my child?**

Parking approximately 10 minutes walk away from the school site is the best option if you are picking up your child by car. Please park with consideration for local residents. If you park in roughly the same area each time your child will become familiar with this. You will then be on your way by approximately 3.40pm rather than waiting until 3.50pm for the gates to open.

### **Am I permitted to collect my child from the school site on foot?**

No: from next week, the school drive is very busy and parents will need to wait outside of the gates.