

# Oaklands Catholic School and Sixth Form College

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Registered in England and Wales, Company No 07721932

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

Our Ref: MQ/SM

19 December 2024

Dear Parents and Carers

As we conclude a fruitful Autumn term, it is one that certainly feels like the longest in history and I cannot remember a time when we broke up for the holidays so late.

This period marks a journey from the end of Summer, traversing the lively season of Autumn, and culminating in the anticipation of Advent and the celebration of Christmas. The concluding week of the Advent season emphasises the theme of love, which may be regarded as the most significant of the four central themes. As we approach this Christmas, my sincere wish is for your homes to be abundant with love and joy.

There have been many special occasions over the last sixteen weeks; I particularly remember the live video link with our partner school in Korogocho, Kenya, experienced by Year 7 students and our Culture Week, watched by the school and open to the wider community. The pinnacle undoubtedly being the outstanding results we achieved during our recent Catholic School Inspection.

This term has been notably active with various celebrations recognising not only the achievements of individual students, but also the collective efforts of the staff and the institution itself. We take pride in our remarkable attendance figures, exemplary standards of behaviour, and the academic advancements made by all student groups, regardless of their ability levels. As we transitioned into the latter half of the term, the focus shifted towards remembrance. The school commemorated Remembrance Day, honouring those we have lost, including members of our school community and individuals who have perished in global conflicts.

## Catholic Church Jubilee Year

I was delighted that we were able to organise Christmas songs of praise with many of the schools in the wider Edith Stein Partnership, this marks the beginning of the Catholic Church's Jubilee year. This can be found by following [this link](#). This is the first of a number of events occurring over the next twelve months.

The school community has supported many campaigns this term. At our carol concert we raised over £825 to support of Mary's Meals, a charity that provided food for children in schools in the poorest parts of the world. Thank you to all who contributed.

## **Uniform**

The current phase of the heating project, which focused on the Sports Hall is complete, so we now have access to the changing rooms. From the beginning of next term (Monday 6<sup>th</sup> January), students will return to wearing their full school uniform on the days they have PE. Mr Wade, Head of PE, has already written to parents confirming these arrangements.

The practice of wearing PE kits on these specific days has elicited mixed reactions from both staff and students; while it has addressed certain issues, it has also introduced new challenges. The forthcoming Children's Welfare Bill, which is set to be presented in Parliament, aims to offer schools enhanced clarity and guidance regarding uniform policies. Once the implications of this legislation are fully understood, the school will reassess its stance on uniform and PE kit requirements. However, it is important to note that no wholesale changes will be implemented prior to September 2025 and will be phased in if required.

If your child is missing items of uniform, the holiday provides an opportunity to purchase new items, this includes school shoes. I would also encourage you to label items with your child's name. This term we have accumulated a significant quantity of lost property, the cumulative replacement costs for parents running into thousands of pounds.

## **Attendance**

Thank you for your support this term in getting children into school, there are a significant number of students who still have 100% attendance, and we hope that this continues into the New Year.

We have had some issues with students contacting their parents/carers on their mobile phones and asking to be collected from school, with the parent/carer then coming to collect them without our knowledge. To clarify, students are not permitted to use their mobile phones in school for any reason; they should be switched off and put in their bags or blazer pockets. If a student needs to contact home for any reason, they should go to Student Services. If they are unwell, they should also report to Student Services who will assess them and call home if needed.

Our Attendance Policy states that if a child goes home during the day having contacted home without following the correct procedure, this will be an unauthorised absence. Please can you remind your child of the correct procedure and help us in ensuring that it is followed.

## **Road Safety**

The safety of our students and staff remains paramount in our minds and actions as a school. A recurring theme which undermines our efforts is the failure of some students and parents to follow the rules set out by the school and underpinned by the Road Safety Act.

Parents/carers driving their children to school in the mornings should ensure they are dropped off by the bus stops and not anywhere also on the school ground, unless there is a recognised medical reason which has been notified to the school. In these cases only, the child can be dropped at the top of Chapel Drive.

## **Student Leadership**

Our Student Council have devised some excellent ideas to take the school forward once again during this term and the Sixth Form Leadership team have been instrumental in driving forward a number of initiatives. I am delighted to announce that Gabriel Jeffrey and Arron Phillips and have been elected to the role of Student President and Deputy. Such is the significance of this position Student Leaders have to sign a leadership covenant, committing themselves to the position.

## Staffing

At this time of year, we have to say goodbye to staff who are moving to pastures new.

Mr Barratt has been Head of Physics at Oaklands since September 2017 and supported staff and students alike with his wealth of knowledge. He has played an active role in the Sixth Form as a tutor and UCAS specialist inspiring many students to choose a career in Physics.

Mr Cooley our Deputy School Business Manager leaves us to become an Executive Business Manager for five schools in Cambridgeshire. Mr Cooley has been responsible for many successful enterprises in school, the latest of which was the successful £2.7million Heating Replacement Installation Project.

We wish them both all the very best for the future.

Finally, I want to acknowledge the outstanding work of my entire staff team over this busy term. Every member of staff continues to do so much above and beyond for our students, making personal sacrifices to ensure that our school community is successful.

I would like to wish you and your loved ones a very holy Christmas and positive journey through the remainder of Advent. I very much look forward to the Oaklands family being able to rest in anticipation of a great start to 2025. Students return on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> January at the normal time.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matthew Quinn', written over a white rectangular background.

Mr M Quinn  
**Headteacher**