

Oaklands Catholic School and Sixth Form College

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Dear Parents and Carers

The pace of life at Oaklands continues to be high, with lots of events taking place as we navigate this term. Over the half term break students are involved in a Maths-based trip to Disneyland Paris and skiing in Andalo, Italy, we wish them good luck.

The primary emphasis during this half term has been on the assessments at Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5, especially for those students preparing for the upcoming summer public examinations. Following these assessments, we organised several follow-up parents' evenings, which served as a platform to engage in discussions regarding student progress. Throughout this term, we have made concerted efforts to reach out to parents who were unable to participate in these significant events, ensuring that they remain informed and involved in their children's education.

Beyond the lively atmosphere of the classroom, students have been diligently rehearsing for the annual school show, which this year features the musical, "*Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*." We extend our gratitude to all who have contributed to the success of this remarkable production, as well as to those who attended and witnessed the extraordinary talent present within our school community. Additionally, sporting events have been occurring frequently, showcasing the active engagement of our students in various fixtures and competitions.

Uniform

Over half term we will be clearing the lost property cupboard, which sadly contains many unnamed items, the total replacement cost for parents will total hundreds of pounds. Unnamed lost school uniform will be recycled and sold on through our nearly-new uniform store. Other items will find their way to charity clothes banks.

Half term provides parents with an opportunity to resolve uniform issues. I have spoken to a number of students about non-regulation footwear. Students need to wear shoes that accord with the uniform policy. Our school policy makes it clear that trainers should not be worn. If you are buying new school shoes over half term, please ensure that they comply with the school policy. All other uniform issues should be resolved before we return.

Governors have also just made a slight change to the PE kit regarding non-logged items. These updates will be communicated after half term.

Nearly New Uniform

Our Oaklands Friends' and Parents' Association (OFPA) hold an extensive collection of second-hand uniform; to purchase this please follow [this link](#).

Their next uniform sale will be on Friday 28th February. Please email any requests and orders by Wednesday 26th February to opa@oaklandscatholicschool.org.

Searching and Screening Students

In 2022, the Department for Education issued guidance regarding the authority schools possess to conduct searches of students and their belongings. Authorised school staff are granted a statutory right to search a student or their possessions if there are reasonable grounds to believe that the student may be in possession of a prohibited item. In response to this guidance, many schools have begun utilising handheld metal detecting wands to identify banned items, such as vaping devices, that may be concealed on a person or within their belongings. Earlier this academic term, the Governing Body approved the implementation of these devices at Oaklands. We plan to conduct a trial of this technology over the next twelve months, and our Behaviour Policy has been revised accordingly to incorporate this new measure.

Year 9 Options

A massive thank you to all Year 9 parents for completing the options Preference Form. My team have now set to work on constructing the option blocks. Inevitably, we will not be able to please all students and this was made clear during the Options Evening. More information will be published after half term.

Piercings

On health and safety grounds we only allow students to wear a limited amount of jewellery in school. The rule is one plain pair of earring studs in pierced ears (in the lobe – no flesh tunnels etc are permitted), a watch and a plain crucifix on a chain. Piercings of any other kind are strictly forbidden. Please do not allow your child to have any other piercing other than that stipulated in our policy.

School Meals

Several of our catering suppliers have notified us of an impending increase in the prices of the products and ingredients they provide to the school. This adjustment is primarily attributed to the rise in National Insurance contributions, which will affect all employers, as well as the increase in the minimum wage. We are committed to minimising any price increases, however some items will increase in price over the next few months. It is important to note that the revenue generated from food sales at the tills primarily covers staff salaries and food costs. All other operational costs, such as energy, maintenance, and equipment replacement, continue to be subsidised by the school.

If you are on a low income your child may be entitled to free school meals. If you believe that this applies to you, please follow [this link](#).

Student Services and Student Medical Issues

A small but growing number of parents have started to approach the school asking for medical advice. Our Student Services team are not medical professionals they are First Aid trained to deal with incidents that take place during the day and react accordingly, administering first aid and contacting parents when necessary. If you have concerns about the fitness of your child to attend school you should contact your GP, local pharmacy or 111, or in an emergency 999.

I would also like to remind parents that if your child has an injury that requires a risk assessment, this will be undertaken at school after they have seen a medical professional. Please ring the school prior to your child returning to arrange a time for the risk assessment to take place and bring any supporting medical evidence with you. Please note that a parent/carer needs to be present when the risk assessment is carried out.

Key Dates for the Remainder of the Spring Term

A full list of dates for the Spring Term can be found on the [school website](#).

Finally, students return to school on Monday 24th February. Easter this year is relatively late; Ash Wednesday is not until 5th March. Lent is the season of spiritual preparation before Easter. During Lent, many Christians observe a period of fasting, repentance, moderation, self-denial, and spiritual discipline. The purpose of the Lenten season is to set aside time for reflection on Jesus Christ - to consider his suffering and his sacrifice, his life, death, burial, and resurrection. We will be exploring some of these themes during the coming weeks with students. In addition to this we will be sharing some of these messages with parents through the Oaklands Way. This will drop into your inbox after half term.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely



Mr M Quinn
Headteacher