

# Oaklands Catholic School and Sixth Form College

Stakes Hill Road  
Waterlooville  
Hampshire  
PO7 7BW

☎ 023 9225 9214

☎ 023 9223 0317

🌐 [www.oaklandscatholicschool.org](http://www.oaklandscatholicschool.org)

✉ [oaklands@oaklandscatholicschool.org](mailto:oaklands@oaklandscatholicschool.org)



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

Our Ref: MQ/SM

4 December 2020

Dear Parents

I write this to you towards the end of the first week in Advent. The First Sunday of Advent is the New Year in the liturgical calendar of the Church. Advent is from the Latin word 'advenire' which means 'to come'. With the celebration of the Advent season, the Church prepares for the coming of our Lord Jesus who came 2,020 years ago. Thus, this season of Advent, we are reminded "not to lose heart because the Lord's coming is near", difficult though that is in the current climate.

## Exams 2021

No doubt you will all have heard yesterday that the Government has finally announced its plans for next year's exams, when Ofsted will resume and other outstanding issues such as league tables. I am not convinced that this announcement brings this whole sordid mess to a conclusion. However, it does place a marker down, after eight months of waiting, in terms of us preparing students in Year 11 and Year 13 for next summer.

Under the plans, pupils will also get advance notice of topics in certain subjects. We also know that students will also be allowed to take in exam aids, such as formula sheets, and be able to sit contingency papers if they are off ill. In extreme circumstances, pupils unable to sit exams would be awarded grades based on "validated teacher assessments". However, the waiting game continues; we have been told that we will have to hold on until the new year for further details on the plans.

## Year 11 Mocks

These continue next week and into the final week of term. All the information is on the 'OCS-Year16Students' Team; updates about seat numbers and other arrangements are provided regularly on there for the students to access.

## Schools in Tier 2

As you are aware, schools in Hampshire are currently in Tier 2. The Government regulations state that schools in areas in local restriction Tier 2 or Tier 3, where pupils in Year 7 and above are educated, face coverings should be worn by adults and pupils or students when moving around outside of classrooms, such as in corridors and communal areas where social distancing cannot easily be maintained. For us, this means we continue with our policy on compulsory face coverings. Thank you for the support you have given to this national directive.

## Extra-Curricular PE Activities

Now that the national lockdown has ended, we are aiming to introduce some extra-curricular activities in PE, provided that the Tier 2 guidance allows it. We are seeking clarity on this, but if it is allowed, we will aim to start these from next week. Mr Bamford will write to parents separately about this, but the plan is that each year group will have a designated night for their activities. The PE department will offer two activities per night, which are likely to be badminton and table tennis in this first phase. Pre-booking using the 'Squad in Touch' system will be essential so that we can track numbers and the participants. Further information to follow.

## Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) for Year 10 and Year 11

We will write to you separately to provide further details relating to this initiative. What is clear is that Teams is now very much a part of daily life for students. Consequently, we would like our Year 10 and Year 11 students to have the option to access the network whilst they are in school using a device, if they wish - provided the member of staff allows them to do so in their lesson. For most students, the device they will use is likely to be their phone, but students can use a tablet or laptop, should they choose to do so. Use of the devices will be designed to enhance the learning experience in certain circumstances; it will not be a substitute for written work in books.

## Music Peripatetic and Christmas Concert

In the absence of being able to rehearse and perform together we have created a virtual concert which will be released on Thursday 10th December - so grab yourself a cup of tea and a mince pie and enjoy our concert in the comfort of your own home. The link to the concert will be added to the school website home page next week [Homepage - Oaklands Catholic School and Sixth Form College](#). With thanks and a very big well done to all performers who have been involved in this new adventure.

## School Uniform Supplier

Skoolkit have confirmed that their shops have re-opened and they are still maintaining their online service.

## Bus Service

We have been informed by Portsmouth City Coaches that the 641 bus service from Southbourne to Oaklands via Rowlands Castle and Leigh Park will be stopping at the end of this term. A letter has been emailed to parents and a copy is also on the school website:

[641-Bus-Service-Announcement-4.12.20.pdf \(oaklandscatholicschool.org\)](#)

## Information for Parents

There is new guidance on school attendance and on the Tier 2 restrictions available on the website for parents: [Parent Zone - COVID - Oaklands Catholic School and Sixth Form College](#)

Lee Haywood, our Internet Safety Consultant, is running a number of workshops for parents on how to set up any new devices purchased for Christmas in a secure way:

[E-Safety - Upcoming Events - Oaklands Catholic School and Sixth Form College](#)

Please see the link from Hampshire on guidance for parents on exploitation:

[exploitation-leaflet.pdf \(oaklandscatholicschool.org\)](#)

Best wishes



Mr M Quinn  
**Headteacher**