

Oaklands Catholic School and Sixth Form College

Stakes Hill Road
Waterlooville
Hampshire
PO7 7BW

☎ 023 9225 9214

☎ 023 9223 0317

🌐 www.oaklandscatholicschool.org

✉ oaklands@oaklandscatholicschool.org



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

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Dear Parents and Carers

I hope all is well with you and your families and that your children have had a settled and enjoyable return to school. Welcome Back!

It has been fantastic to have youngsters and staff back in school this week and it has also been a pleasure to hear laughter and observe learning, enthusiasm and engagement as I have walked the corridors, classrooms and outside areas. The number of "I'm good - how are you?" responses when I have checked in on students has made it hard to take the smile off my face!

I get a sense that we are on the cusp of a change as we now consider the next steps in the national roadmap. For the first time in a while I have been able to look over the parapet at some of the issues that matter in school. Rebuilding a culture of learning after all the COVID actions will take intentional action. Work on our prayer life, curriculum and behaviour are part of this narrative. Whilst we have a national roadmap, the long term timelines are unclear. Some of the scientific advisors are already talking up control measures for next winter and a third wave. I believe the schools that consider the 'long game' will fare best overall.

Communicating (and over-communicating) what is important and what is expected will be critical, your contribution here will also help. This week I have spoken to the majority of students in assemblies about expectations and behaviour. Creating a compelling purpose that the whole school community or year groups can rally around will draw pupils towards those values and norms that are part of our distinctive ethos. The Year 9 Mission Day on 5th May and others later in the term are good examples of events that will help build this.

Building a strong sense of belonging will be important. Students will have had a wide range of experiences as a result of the pandemic; school should be a place where they feel immediately welcome, experience togetherness and see the critical role they play; this is where the Oaklands Way has an impact.

COVID-19 has resulted in us implementing different and new systems in school; some of these I will be keen to drop once normality returns. There are others, for example, on-line Parents' Evenings and the staggered end of the day, that appear to have been well received by many students and parents. Some of these changes we may keep for the long term.

Lateral Flow Tests

The delivery of LFT kits to school was delayed due to circumstances beyond our control. We expect to get the next batch out to students early next week. Having had such an excellent take up rate of testing, we are keen not to lose momentum. Please ensure that once the kits come home, the twice weekly testing routine resumes each Wednesday and Sunday before 7.00pm and that results are uploaded to both school and the NHS using Test Register. We do appreciate your support in this matter.

Please find the up to date COVID-19 guidance for parents and carers:

[What parents need to know about early years providers, schools and colleges during COVID-19 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/what-parents-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-during-covid-19)

'Everyone Invited' Website

The website now has over 14,000 submissions nationally and these cover a broad range of issues and types of abuse. It is important to note that at this stage there is no context to the submissions in regard to schools that have been named. For example, they could be historic allegations that may already have been investigated, they might be new allegations but given the anonymity of many, it will clearly be a complex matter to investigate and understand.

From a Hampshire Constabulary perspective, the matters will be dealt with under the umbrella of Operation Hydrant.

The Department for Education (DfE) has recently commissioned the NSPCC to provide a helpline to support potential victims and provide advice to children and adults. That helpline can be accessed via the NSPCC helpline, Report Abuse in Education on 0800 136 663 or email help@nspcc.org.uk.

As a result of discussions with the DfE, Ofsted will now review safeguarding procedures in both state and independent schools and will consider any amendments they need to make to the inspection framework. If there are particular concerns about allegations in respect of an individual school raised on the website, then Ofsted will prioritise visits or inspections accordingly.

It is worth underlining the importance of working in every way possible to establish a culture in all schools and in society at large in which abuse of the kind testified to on the Everyone's Invited website is absolutely not accepted by anyone.

We have already started to formulate a response here at Oaklands and to consider what we, along with you as parents, need to do to address the issues raised and we will share this more widely with you in due course.

School Crossing Patrol

Please note that our School Crossing Patrol is currently unwell and unable to be on duty outside Oaklands. We have been in contact with Hampshire County Council but there is no relief cover available, so please remind your children to take extra care when crossing Stakes Hill Road at the beginning and end of the day.

Electric Scooters

Electric scooters must not be brought into school. Whilst it is not illegal to own one of these devices, the law related to their use on roads and pavements is clear. It remains illegal to use an electric scooter on a public road without complying with a number of legal requirements, which potential users will find very difficult. It is also illegal to use them on spaces that are set aside for use by pedestrians, cyclists, and horse-riders; this includes on the pavement and in cycle lanes. Electric scooters brought into school will be confiscated.

Any person who uses a e-scooter on a public road or other prohibited space in breach of the law is committing a criminal offence and can be prosecuted.

There are currently a number of trial schemes in Portsmouth related to hiring devices, where the use of e-scooters is permitted for the duration of the pilot scheme.

Finally, for the remainder of this academic year, I intend to drop the frequency of my letters down to once a fortnight. This in some small way is an indication that we are returning to normality. I will of course update you outside of this frequency if there are issues of significance.

Yours sincerely



Mr M Quinn
Headteacher