

# Oaklands Catholic School and Sixth Form College

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Dear Carers and Parents

This week we come to the end of the Church's year; the Feast of Christ the King falls on Sunday and the following week marks the beginning of Advent. The feast day is a reminder of the need to build good relationships with both God and one another.

At Oaklands anything which undermines respectful relationships within the community is damaging to what we aspire to be. We have clear expectations that are based upon Christian principles and are rooted in Gospel Values. There are some behaviours that are not consistent with community life. No doubt you will be aware of some of the vile and defamatory information that some members of the teaching profession in some schools have been subject to on social media. If any member of the school community is involved in such action they will be excluded from Oaklands and if necessary this will be permanent.

The apparent anonymity of social media is a toxic weapon that can create great harm. Most students don't understand that there is an electronic trail that leads from the social media company back to the device that authored the content. I would urge you to check your child's mobile phone to ensure that the postings or messages sent on social media are appropriate. When we communicate electronically, the subject or the recipient is a person and as such we must have the same standard of respect towards them as if they were in the room next to us. Could you please remind your children of this.

## Year 11 Mock Examinations

We are enjoying being back into the rhythm of a far more "normal" school year, although the by-product of this is that the weeks are speeding by. Year 11 begin their mock exams at the end of next week and many students will have regular in-class assessments before the end of term. We continue to approach all assessments with an attitude of great purpose. Mock exams are designed to give students and teachers a clear idea of comparative strengths and weaknesses, in order to focus work and revision on the right areas in the final months of each course. Grades are important, of course, but it is crucial to note that mock grades are a foundation on which to build success.

It is invigorating to run a full academic and pastoral calendar again and we continue to be incredibly proud of how our students, staff and parents are working so effectively together.

## Attendance

Our school has high levels of attendance and this is vital to help children achieve and get the best possible start in life. Students who frequently miss school fall behind and there is a strong link between good school attendance and achieving good results.

All parents have a responsibility to monitor the health of their children. As adults, if we feel slightly 'groggy' in the morning this is not an excuse to miss work. Similarly, for children and school, a 'duvet day' is not in a child's interest.

New guidance has been produced in collaboration with the NHS and partners to help parents and carers decide whether to send their child to school if they are feeling unwell.

This online resource provides quick access to information that will help someone identify a possible health condition from a range of symptoms and whether the child should remain at home. On the website is a list of common childhood illnesses and conditions from conjunctivitis to head lice, as well as symptoms such as a high temperature and a sore throat and what these might mean. There is advice about what to do and when a child should return to education after being treated. A link to this resource can be found here: [\*\*Should your child go to school today?\*\*](#)

If your child appears unwell at school, we have staff who can make an assessment and if necessary, we will contact you.

If your child is absent from school, then it is important that you leave a message on the absence line [023 9224 8053](tel:02392248053). [The line is open 24/7](#) so please leave a message as soon as you know your child will be absent from school. Or you can email [attendance@oaklandscatholicschool.org](mailto:attendance@oaklandscatholicschool.org) at any time. If you need to speak to a member of the Attendance team, please indicate this in your message and they will call you back as soon as possible.

Please be familiar with our school processes for reporting absence, which can be found on the school website [\*\*Attendance - Oaklands Catholic School and Sixth Form College\*\*](#).

## Classcharts

Please ensure that you and your child are monitoring Classcharts regularly, there are important daily updates on your child's achievements and behaviour in school. All detentions are set on Classcharts and we no longer send home a paper slip for you to sign. When your child is set a detention, please sign their planner to give your consent for them to stay after school. We have had to upscale some detentions where students have failed to attend the initial detention as they did not check their Classcharts and were therefore were unaware of the detention.

## Vaccinations

The COVID Vaccinations run by the NHS were very successful with a high uptake. The NHS staff wished to pass on their thanks to students for the exemplary manner in which they conducted themselves. Well done to all involved.

We now move on to the flu vaccinations at the end of this term. Information has been sent out to all parents via separate communication. A link to this can be found here [\*\*Flu Vaccination Parent Letter 2021\*\*](#).

## Anti-Bullying Week 2021

This week has been national anti-bullying week and we have been delivering a range of pastoral input through assemblies and tutor time regarding this important subject. As a school, we are committed to ensuring that every member of our community understands what bullying is, and each of our responsibilities in creating a school culture, which is respectful, considerate and supportive.

We are completely certain that we will always act on concerns and issues, and take all necessary steps. As most parents know unpicking relationship issues between teenagers can be difficult, particularly when it is perpetuated on social media. However, we have a strong track record in resolving issues, and ideally like to know about concerns as early as possible, so if students or parents do have any concerns whatsoever please do contact the relevant Head of Year.

I am aware that many parents also like to support the school's input on pastoral content, as one of the key features of an anti-bullying culture is one in which every single member of the school community is clear on what they can do to eradicate bullying. There is a full pack of information, specifically for parents and carers here: <https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/anti-bullying-week/parents-and-carers>

## Applications for Oaklands Sixth Form 2022

The first deadline for Sixth Form applications is Wednesday 16 December. After this time, we will begin to construct the timetable option blocks and subject combinations may be limited if forms are not submitted on time using [this link](#).

We are excited to see that we already have over thirty applications from students in Year 11 at neighbouring secondary schools, wishing to join us for high quality post-16 education. We have seen record numbers come back to Oaklands for September 2021, including five Oaklands students who left for local FE Colleges but returned after two months when they saw what the educational and pastoral offer was in Oaklands Sixth Form College in comparison to other providers.

## COVID-19 and Regular Lateral Flow Testing

A reminder to all students and families to continue rapid COVID-19 testing twice weekly to stay ahead of the virus. It is also important to report test results each time a test is taken, whether it is positive, negative or void at [www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result](http://www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result).

## Can you help our Performing Arts Department?

Finally, if any parents or carers have an unwanted piano stool that they could donate to the school, please let us know.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely



Mr M Quinn  
**Headteacher**