

# Oaklands Catholic School and Sixth Form College

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

Our Ref: MQ/SM

18 February 2022

Dear Parents and Carers

This was not quite the end of term that I had in mind. Storm Eunice is in full force battering the South Coast. At the time of writing, it feels quite strange being in an empty school, knowing it should be a school day. I hope most of our trees survive the worse that nature can throw against them. Both students and staff now need to rest from what has been an intense term and a huge amount of work.

The next term runs alongside one of the great seasons in the Church's year; Lent. The great Catholic leader Cardinal Newman said "*To live is to change and to change often is to be perfect*". Lent is an invitation to change - the question for us each year is what would I like to change for the better in my life? Change won't happen unless we sign up for it. Lasting forty days (excluding Sundays), it is a time when Christians focus their minds on three areas; prayer, fasting and good works.

## Exams for Year 11 and Year 13

Work continues on the guidance we recently received regarding the summer examinations for Year 11 and Year 13 students. Modifications to exam content was shared publicly and subject teachers are now digesting this and working out how best to teach key areas, to prepare students effectively for their exams. What is clear is that this is not going to be like previous years of exams, but that no student should be disadvantaged because of this. To this extent, Ofqual are working with examination boards to ensure that this is the case and grade boundaries will be applied fairly.

Mr Bamford will communicate the arrangements for the Year 11 History exam, which was postponed due to the school closure on Friday.

## COVID-19

After Christmas I hoped that the start of the Spring term would feel normal, sadly this has not been the case. Staff have been absent due to COVID-19 or caring for dependants for the same reason. As the NHS starts to catch up with delayed medical procedures, a number of colleagues have been in hospital. We continue to keep all our staff and families in our thoughts and prayers. Remaining open this term and providing face to face education to our students has been a priority, necessitating some creative solutions. We continue to receive advice from the Department for Education and Public Health England regarding the pandemic and review our risk assessment regularly.

The **second round of COVID vaccinations** will take place on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> February and Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> March in the Gym. Students will need to wear a PE top for the two days to give the nurses access to their upper arm. Mr Bamford will communicate the plan on Teams over the holiday.

## Staffing in School

Data released by the DfE earlier this month confirmed that the number of individuals applying for teacher training is down by almost a quarter compared with last year. All schools are reporting how difficult it is to attract staff in the current climate. We are currently recruiting across a number of subjects using national adverts and other networks. We have had more success than many schools, however this still remains a challenge. As a result, in the short term, in some subjects, it may be necessary to move students across groups to ensure all students have access to specialist staff.

## Extra-Curricular



The extra-curricular life of the school continues to gather momentum. I was pleased to see students playing rugby against local opposition during the week. We also held a very successful Language Day in school for Year 8 students. International trips are being planned for next year.

Rehearsals are continuing for our whole school production of The Addams Family.

Tickets can be purchased via the school website by following [this link](#). Alternatively, you can buy tickets via your Scopay account.

## Year 9 Options

Year 9 students are now entering their time at Oaklands where they will need to think about the future and what option courses they will study in Year 10. The Options Booklets have gone home; please follow [this link](#) if you need another copy. Year 9 Parents are invited to the Options' Evening on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> March at 7.00pm.

## Uniform

I have been impressed this term with students' behaviour and uniform standards. The vast majority of students take great pride in their school and act accordingly. However, there are a small minority of students that sometimes fall below our uniform standards, particularly in relation to their appearance. Our Uniform Policy can be found on [our website](#).

Over the holiday some students may take on an appearance that does not comply with the policy. It is important that by the time students return on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> February, nail varnish, shellac, gel or false nails or false eyelashes are removed and hair returns to its natural colour.

Thank you once again for your continued support and I hope you have wonderful break.

Yours sincerely

Mr M Quinn  
**Headteacher**