

# Oaklands Catholic School and Sixth Form College

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

Our Ref: MQ/SM

9 September 2022

Dear Parents and Carers

Welcome back! I hope that you are well and that you have all had the opportunity to relax and have a break during the Summer. I have written separately about the passing of Queen Elizabeth.

At the end of next week you will receive a copy of the Oaklands News which will contain all the important information for the year ahead. There are however a few important points that need to be emphasised before then.

We have been busy here at school during the holidays with our ongoing programme of refurbishment and redecoration. My thanks initially go to our very dedicated site staff who have worked tirelessly at this time. I would also, once again, like to congratulate our GCSE and A Level cohort this year; more information can be found on the school website. Both sets of results were extremely pleasing considering the journey that the nation's students have been on over the last few years. As parents, your day-to-day support of everything we are doing here at Oaklands has played, and continues to play, a crucial role in securing great outcomes for our students.

## Open Evening

Our Open Evening occurs this year on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> September. There will be an early close and finish for the students at 2.45pm. We do hope, however, that as many students as possible will stay to be tour guides. Students who volunteer to be guides will receive a free evening meal and we are considering other ways to reward students who help during this important event.

## Year 7 Information Evening, Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> September 2022, 7.00pm

If you are a Year 7 parent you will already have received information about this event. It is important that every child is represented at this evening.

## Uniform

I have been extremely impressed with the way that the vast majority of students have presented themselves over the first few days, this needs to continue. I am a great believer that uniform should be worn with pride and dignity. Your child will be rewarded for the correct uniform, equally they will be challenged if it is incorrect, particularly if it compromises their own dignity.

The correct wearing of uniform and adherence to the policy of jewellery, hair and piercings starts in the home. Uniform infringements will be recorded through ClassCharts so that parents are aware.

**Facial piercings:** facial and body piercings are not permitted for students. Whilst this list is not exhaustive, the main point is that only one pair of plain stud earrings are allowed; nose studs, lip piercings, eyebrow bars and studs are not allowed. Again, your support in this matter is greatly appreciated.

**Hair:** there will be some students who seek to experiment with hair dyes and cuts over the summer holiday. Again, I would ask that students do not dye their hair or have extreme haircuts now they have returned to school. With both hair and piercings, students will not be allowed to attend normal lessons if they do not comply with our expectations, they will work in isolation until the matter is resolved.

**School Shoes:** another reminder that students must be wearing black leather school shoes. Leather trainers are not part of our school uniform and if a student is wearing these to school, they will be asked to work in isolation until they have appropriate footwear. I realise that some companies are marketing leather trainers in the 'back to school' section which is not helpful but they are not appropriate and breach our health and safety expectations.

**Make Up:** Students should not wear make-up to school, this includes false eyelashes. Please do not allow your child to have false eyelashes professionally done as these are not easy to remove and your child will have to work in isolation until they are.

## Use of Language

Last year as part of The Oaklands Way we focused on the use of language, this will continue again this year. We should be respectful to all around us. No-one in school may use inappropriate language, for example language that is homophobic, racist, or disablist. Expletives or words which are sexually explicit are also inappropriate for school.

We now operate in a world in which we strive for greater respect. This cannot happen if poor choices are made, especially swearing. Please be aware that if your child makes a poor choice in the language they use, this will result in some form of exclusion. Appropriate choice of words and language is a key way in which we show others that we have respect for them. Please discuss this with your child. Thank you for your support.

## Site Improvements

As mentioned previously, the school site has had further improvements over the summer holiday. A number of the Saint Thomas More block classrooms have been refurbished. Money donated by parents to the school through the Governors' school development fund helps finance projects such as this. If you are interested in contributing, please follow [this link](#).

Many of our student toilets are open access, that is there is a line of sight to the wash hand basins from the corridors. We have increased the CCTV coverage in these and corridor areas. CCTV helps us resolve issues when they occur.

If you visit school you may also notice that the school pond has received some much overdue maintenance. This was necessary for health and safety reasons and to prevent further egress of water into the White House. I am sure the fish will also benefit.

## Mobile Phones

If your child is in Key Stages 3 and 4, please can you remind them that mobile phones must be out of sight and not used during the school day. The policy is framed in this way to avoid situations where young people spend yet more time on electronic devices which do not encourage face to face social interaction, which is so important for learning social skills as a child grows up. The second concern we should all have is about the appropriate use of mobile telephones. Please monitor the usage of your child's phone in order to ensure that both they and others are safe.

## Finance

You will understand from the media and from your own experiences at home, the huge financial pressures that the school is under. Rising salary costs, utility charges and general inflation is having an impact on the school finances and whilst we will do everything we can to shield parents from these rising costs it is inevitable that we will have to put up charges in order that the school is able to deliver the best teaching and learning possible.

We have already had to increase our prices in the canteen but have kept the increase at 5% which is half the current inflation rate of 10%. Charges for our contracted bus services will be kept under review as will charges for school trips, Design Tech contributions and other charges we necessarily have to levy. For those families in real financial difficulties, we will help as much as we can, please contact me if you feel there is anything we can do to help.

## Calendar of Events

As usual, we will publish the term's key dates and events in our next edition of Oaklands News. However, the following events are taking place over the next two weeks:

Monday 12 <sup>th</sup> September	7.30pm	Oaklands' Friends and Parents' Association Meeting
Thursday 15 <sup>th</sup> September	7.00pm	Year 7 Parent Information Session
Thursday 22 <sup>nd</sup> September	6.00pm	Year 12 Welcome Evening
Monday 26 <sup>th</sup> September	5.00-8.00pm	School Open Evening (early finish at 2.45pm)

Lastly, central to the school's values is the promotion of positive relationships and reconciliation when things go wrong. Should your child fall out with another student, please tell them to talk to staff. The school has staff who are well trained in restorative justice and this makes a real difference to the quality of relationships. In this way we are showing respect to others and as a Catholic educational community we seek to resolve any underlying tensions in a peaceful manner.

Thank you for your ongoing support as we look forward to another successful year at Oaklands.

Yours sincerely



Mr M Quinn  
**Headteacher**

## **Transport Related FAQs**

### **Where do I drop my child off in the morning?**

Children should be dropped off on the school drive by the bus shelters. Please note that this is a 'drop off' area only as access is required by buses and other parents. Please only use the visitors' car parks if you have an appointment or need to visit Reception. No parking is permitted in other areas of the school.

### **What time do students finish?**

At the end of the day, the dismissal of Key Stages will be staggered (KS3 at 3.20pm, KS4 & 5 at 3.30pm). Students will be escorted down the drive by their class teachers. Students will need to leave the school site as soon as their day ends in order to clear the buildings. Students should go straight home. Key Stage 3 students will be permitted to board buses as soon as they arrive. In the event of bad weather and a known delay to buses, students will be given the option of waiting in the Hall.

### **What time are the school gates open?**

The school gates will not open until 3.50pm, as the buses need to vacate the drive. Please do not try to park in front of the school gate before 3.50pm as you could obstruct buses that are trying to enter the site.

### **What time do the buses arrive?**

The buses should be on site by 3.20pm ready for the first students. If a bus is late, the school will contact the bus company.

### **If I am collecting my child by car where do I pick them up from?**

You will drive on to the school site, around the roundabout then back down the drive. The pick-up point is on the left side of the drive. Parents must not stop on the bus shelter side of the driveway or on the roundabout.

### **Where can I park locally to wait for my child?**

Parking approximately 10 minutes away from the school site is the best option if you are picking up your child by car. Please park with consideration for local residents. If you park in roughly the same area each time your child will become familiar with this. You will then be on your way by approximately 3.30pm for KS3 rather than waiting until 3.50pm for the gates to open.

### **Am I permitted to collect my child from the school site on foot?**

No: from next week, the school drive is very busy and parents will need to wait outside of the gates.