

Oaklands Catholic School and Sixth Form College

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Edith Stein Catholic Academy Trust
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Headteacher: Matthew Quinn B.Ed (Hons), M.A., NPQH

Our Ref: MQ/SM

10 February 2023

Dear Parents and Carers

I would like to thank all parents for their support so far this year, the academic year has not been without its challenges and successes. Our home school partnership is the bedrock of our success and excellent reputation in the community. Whilst I don't court feedback from parents it is always pleasing when they talk about the outstanding pastoral care youngsters or families have received, particularly so when situations are difficult as they are for many families at the present time.

Uniform

Half term provides parents with an opportunity to resolve uniform issues. I have spoken to a number of students about non-regulation footwear. I was astounded when one youngster told me that his trainers cost £160, this is considerably more than a pair of school shoes. Students need to wear shoes that accord with the uniform policy. Our [school policy](#) makes it clear that trainers should not be worn. Recently, a number of shoe manufacturers have started to market trainers masquerading as school shoes. I think we would all agree that the models on the left and centre are trainers and the model on the right is a shoe.



If you are buying new school shoes over half term, please ensure that they comply with the school policy. If you are aware that your child has 'non-compliant' footwear we will be allowing a period of grace, however this issue needs to be resolved as soon as possible.

All other uniform issues should be resolved before we return.

Our Oaklands Friends' and Parents' Association (OFPA) hold an extensive collection of second-hand uniform; to purchase this please follow [this link](#). For this month orders have to be submitted by Wednesday 22nd February for collection on Friday 24th February.

Piercings

Similar to uniform, the school regulations on piercings is clear and can be found by following [this link](#). Unfortunately, it creates a point of tension when students return after a short holiday with piercing inappropriate for school. Again, we would respectfully ask that you do not put your child in a position where they present in a manner that is in tension with the school policy.

Student Equipment

Being prepared for learning is really important; it removes a lot of frustration throughout the day. Could I please ask that during half term, you check and ensure your child has a pen, pencil, colouring pencils, ruler, and a calculator. Without these items the start to lessons are delayed and learning time is lost to giving out and loaning equipment.

Year 9 Options

A massive thank you to all Year 9 parents for completing the options information. This has been the most successful and speedy return ever!

My team have now set to work on the curriculum model. Inevitably we will not be able to please all students; this was made clear during the Options Evening. I hope that all students will receive their first choice and the vast majority their second choice. A small number of students may be asked to take a reserve choice. Once again thank you all for your prompt replies.

Free School Meals

For some families navigating through the benefit system can be problematic. If you are on a low income your child may be entitled to free school meals. If you believe that this applies to you, please follow these links:

[Free school meals | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](https://www.hants.gov.uk/free-school-meals)

[Apply for free school meals - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/apply-for-free-school-meals)

Children's Mental Health Week

This week is Children's Mental Health week. There are a range of resources available to help parents and carers to support young people who are struggling with their emotional health and wellbeing.

- Visit [CAMHS \(hampshirecamhs.nhs.uk\)](https://www.hampshirecamhs.nhs.uk) which has a range of support and resources for children and young people, written to help them with life issues and common problems they may be facing
- [Help! I'm in crisis – CAMHS \(hampshirecamhs.nhs.uk\)](https://www.hampshirecamhs.nhs.uk/help-im-in-crisis) has a flow chart which offers clear guidance if a young person is in crisis
- **Text SHOUT to 85258** - Shout is a free, 24/7 text service available to support people of all ages with their mental health and wellbeing
- The Hampshire *Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)* **AIM** card has a variety of support for parents and carers to help their young person
- [Mental Wellbeing Hampshire](https://www.mentalwellbeinghampshire.org.uk) has a directory of support for families in Hampshire
- www.childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk has official resources for Children's Mental Health Week

Attendance

We received notification at the end of last term that we are in the top 25% of schools across the country for attendance; this is despite some rather ferocious seasonal bugs. As we move into the spring, I hope that attendance will improve further.

Road Safety

Once again, we have been experiencing difficulties with parents/carers not following the highway code whilst they are on the school site. In particular, students are being dropped off on the roundabout at the top of the main entrance road which causes an obstruction to other traffic and blocks the entrance to the staff and visitors' car park off the roundabout. There is also a real danger of a student being injured, or worse, by cars who are trying to squeeze past those cars that are stopping inconsiderately on the roundabout. This area is now being monitored by CCTV.

Parents and carers dropping their children off at school are kindly reminded that they must stop by the kerb closest to the bus shelters and get their children to safely alight onto the path. This leads to a newly marked-out pedestrian crossing which should be used to safely walk to the playground area and school buildings.

Road safety is also being compromised by parents parking their cars on site up to an hour or more before children are due to leave school. This causes obstructions for the school buses getting on site and leaving in a safe manner. Please help us keep your children safe by not entering the site to pick up before 3.50pm, when the entrance gate will be opened and 2-way traffic can resume.

School Show - *School of Rock* Tickets on sale!

Our show for 2023 is Andrew Lloyd Webber's "**School of Rock**" based on the film starring Jack Black. We're excited to bring something rock-driven to the stage and will have, as ever, a live band of students, staff and friends of the school.

The Performing Arts Team have been working hard on rehearsals with students from every year group. Students and staff give up their free time at break, lunch, after school and on Sundays to work on the show - it's a real labour of love for all involved!

School of Rock comes to Oaklands on 1st, 2nd and 3rd March 2023 and tickets are available **now** via the following link:

[School of Rock Tickets](#)



Year 7 Parents' Evening

We have taken the decision to move the Year 7 Parents' Consultation Evening from Thursday 16th March to Tuesday 14th March.

Unfortunately, 16th March is a scheduled strike day for the National Education Union. At this juncture I do not know the extent of the disruption, but moving the parents evening will de-risk this.

Finally, students return to school on Monday 20th February. Wednesday 22nd February is Ash Wednesday, the start of the Lenten season in the Christian church.

Each year the Church gives us six weeks to take a long, loving look at our lives to see if our values and priorities are in line with God's desires for us. Lent becomes that second chance, or do-over, to return to God with our whole heart. Over the next half term our assemblies and other spiritual activities will help student orientate themselves towards the risen Christ at the end of the Easter Season.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matthew Quinn', with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Mr M Quinn
Headteacher