

Oaklands Catholic School and Sixth Form College

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Edith Stein Catholic Academy Trust
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)
Registered in England and Wales, Company No 07721932

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

Our Ref: EC/MQ/SM

31 January 2025

Dear Parents and Carers

On behalf of the Governing Body I wish to express our sincere gratitude to the vast majority of parents and carers for their steadfast support so far this year. Your involvement in various practical initiatives and the encouragement you provide to your children at home play a pivotal role in fostering a successful educational environment. The collaboration between families and the school is undeniably essential for achieving our shared goals and ensuring the overall success of our students.

As a Governing Body, we hold the school accountable for maintaining and exceeding the behavioural standards that we have established and that you, as parents, expect. I am pleased to share that a significant number of students consistently demonstrate exemplary behaviour and meet what I believe to be reasonable expectations. Mr Quinn and other senior staff frequently engage with students to acknowledge their achievements, and many families have received commendation letters in recognition of their children's conduct. It is gratifying to hear the pride expressed by parents regarding their children's behaviour, and I am encouraged by the numerous positive remarks from parents, community members, and visitors about the commendable behaviour exhibited by the majority of our students. Such exemplary conduct is integral to the ethos of our school, as it profoundly influences the daily experiences of everyone within our educational community.

However, in a recent discussion with Mr Quinn, he conveyed concerns regarding a growing trend among a small subset of parents who are imposing unreasonable expectations on the school, coming into school demanding to talk to a teacher, being verbally aggressive in either written or verbal communication or expecting school to be a '24/7 service'. Several years ago, we took the initiative to publish a set of guidelines which can be found on our school website via [this link](#). This outlines the appropriate ways for parents to engage with the school community.

I am pleased to report that the overwhelming majority of parents interact with the school in a constructive and respectful manner. We appreciate your continued support in fostering a positive school environment.

In a mainstream secondary school, the expectation is that students will take accountability for their actions and the decisions they make. Therefore, it is quite disheartening to hear Mr Quinn express his worries about the rising number of objections from a small group of parents when it becomes essential and justified to address their children's inappropriate and frequently poor behaviour. It is unreasonable to attempt to normalise such unacceptable or irresponsible behaviour by labelling it as a mere characteristic of adolescence or to downplay it as a form of collective behaviour. Further it is not appropriate for parents to suggest a student can operate outside the parameters we set because they are allowed to behave differently at home.

Governors expect the school to apply the Behaviour Policy that includes both rewarding and sanctioning where necessary. I look to all parents and carers to support the school. As I have indicated, there is a small but growing number of parents who want to 'negotiate' with the school over the imposition of sanctions on their child and then lobby for a lessening of the established thresholds for those standards. This simply does not align with the tenets of the Home School Agreement, nor does it promote a fair and equitable application of our policies.

I understand that some may perceive the tone of this message as rather assertive; however, it is crucial for all of us to recognise the gravity with which we approach our shared responsibilities in maintaining these high standards. We are steadfast in our commitment to not compromise on these principles, as they contribute significantly to the esteemed reputation and successful outcomes that Oaklands has achieved. It is essential therefore to remind everyone that by selecting Oaklands, you have also committed to collaborating with the Governors and the school staff in upholding the high standards that we have established. I trust that these standards were a significant factor in your decision to choose Oaklands for your children's education.

In the final analysis, if students and parents cannot align themselves with the values and the ethos of our school then we will be required to consider their continued membership of the Oaklands community.

I look forward to your ongoing support for Oaklands School and Sixth Form College, so that all the staff may concentrate on the provision of the high quality Catholic Education you and all governors expect.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Elizabeth R Cluett', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Elizabeth R Cluett
PhD, MSc, RM, SRN, PGCEA, PFHEA
Chair of Governors