

# 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

11 February 2025

Dear Parents

Addressing the topic of financial contributions in correspondence with parents is a delicate matter, especially when it pertains to voluntary donations.

The principle known as the "Option for the Poor and Vulnerable" serves as a fundamental tenet within Catholic Social Teaching. This principle emphasises a preferential concern for those who are less fortunate, underscoring our ethical responsibility to prioritise the needs of vulnerable members of society. It calls for action to combat issues such as poverty, inequality, and social injustice, which are sadly too prevalent in our communities.

As a school we actively promote the values of Catholic Social Teaching among our students, and one of the primary methods through which we achieve this is by encouraging charitable giving. Throughout the academic year, there are numerous opportunities for students to engage in philanthropic activities. These initiatives may include bake sales, sports competitions, and various sponsored events, all designed to foster a spirit of generosity and community involvement. Various student groups take the initiative to raise funds for local charities, worthy causes, and national organisations, such as CAFOD. I would like to express my sincere appreciation for the dedication and hard work demonstrated by our students, staff, and parents in these charitable efforts. Their commitment not only supports those in need but also instils a sense of social responsibility and empathy in students, reinforcing the importance of giving back to the community.

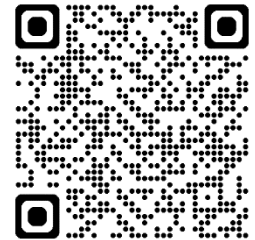
As a school we organise non-uniform days twice a year, requesting a donation of £2 per student. To provide some context, this amount is roughly equivalent to two-thirds of a cup of coffee from a popular coffee chain. These non-uniform days are well-received by students, who frequently express a desire for more such days. They present an excellent opportunity to raise a substantial amount of money for charitable causes with minimal effort; it's a 'winner' for the students and the charities.

Regrettably, donation participation rate has declined, with only about 50% of students contributing, although virtually all students take the opportunity to wear non-uniform. This situation has prompted concerns from both parents and students regarding the fairness of the current arrangement; a significant number of students are benefiting from the non-uniform days without making any donations.

I am aware of schools that have implemented a system where students receive a non-uniform ticket only after making a payment. However, I am hesitant to adopt such a system, it is not in the spirit of what we are trying to achieve and would result in an administrative burden.

Some schools have also opted to eliminate non-uniform days entirely in favour of alternative fundraising methods, which may offer a more equitable solution. I intend to consult with the School Council for their thoughts and ideas on the way forward.

I acknowledge that this is a delicate issue, and I fully understand that each family's financial circumstances vary. I would like to extend my gratitude to those who have already made their donation. For those who are still in a position to contribute £2, I encourage you to do so through SCOPAY, and you can easily access this option by following the provided QR code. Your support is invaluable in helping us continue our charitable efforts and ensuring that all students can participate in these enjoyable events.



Thank you once again for your support for our charities and good causes.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mr M Quinn', written in a cursive style.

Mr M Quinn  
**Headteacher**