

Oaklands Catholic School and Sixth Form College

Stakes Hill Road
Waterlooville
Hampshire
PO7 7BW

☎ 023 9225 9214

📠 023 9223 0317

🌐 www.oaklandscatholicschool.org

✉ oaklands@oaklandscatholicschool.org



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: MQ/SM

4 April 2025

Dear Parents and Carers

Easter holds a unique significance, serving as a time for spiritual renewal. It provides us with an opportunity to contemplate our individual journeys and reminds us that we are not alone in facing life's challenges. At the end of term, we helped students prepare with our Easter services which encouraged everyone to reflect on the pivotal moments of Jesus' journey, including the Last Supper, His crucifixion, and the ultimate victory represented by His resurrection on Easter morning. The practices of fasting and demonstrating kindness towards others have been particularly noteworthy, and we take great pride in the accomplishments of our young people during this season. My thanks to the staff who have organised exceptional activities with their Forms, which have fostered a sense of appreciation among our students for their blessings and inspired them to consider ways to assist others during this time. It was particularly heart-warming to write to one family whose child successfully raised over £170.00 for CAFOD as part of Form fundraising.

As we approach the holiday break, the invigorating essence of Spring fills the air, bringing with it a sense of hope and comfort. I have posted the times and dates of the Easter services of local parishes on our website, please follow [this link](#).

This Term

This term has been particularly busy, especially for our Year 11 and Year 13 students, who are diligently preparing for their upcoming examinations. Their dedication has been truly commendable, and it is my sincere hope that they feel the unwavering support of the entire school as they navigate these crucial weeks, the public exams will be with them soon enough.

The academic year has a rhythmic cadence to it; no sooner have students returned from the holiday, preparations for the following September start, this term planning gathers momentum. Most secondary schools engage in planning approximately twelve months ahead. This meticulous organisation, combined with the unwavering dedication and commitment of our staff and governors, as well as the invaluable support from our parent community, is what distinguishes Oaklands as a remarkable school. There are so many fantastic activities that are testimony to this, highlights this term include the school production, Design Showcase, ski trip, success in sport, to name but a few.

Financial Issues

To ensure the delivery of a high-quality education, it is imperative that all schools are sufficiently funded. I would be derelict in my duty if I did not share with you the challenges ahead. In recent years, the funding of education has posed a considerable challenge, leading to growing concerns within schools; I am more anxious about funding than I have been in the last 20 years of Headship. This year I have yet to encounter a fellow Headteacher who is not expressing worries about potentially substantial budget cuts necessary to maintain balanced budgets for the 2025-26 academic year. At Oaklands our prudent financial management has positioned us more favourably than many other schools. However, it is important to recognise that our reserves are finite and can only be spent once.

The financial pressures facing all schools are escalating; it has been widely reported that the grant to cover the increase in National Insurance contributions this April will fall short for many schools, this comes on top of a crisis in SEND funding. Additionally, the ongoing rise in energy costs, coupled with a recent increase in water rates, further exacerbates the strain on our utilities budget. When I wrote to you on 14th February, I indicated that the cost of a school meal was to rise after Easter, we now have a clearer picture of this as food suppliers pass on increased costs related to their own utilities, National Insurance and the minimum wage. A two-course school meal still represents good value for money, rising roughly in line with inflation, other items will see a larger price increase.

We are determined to keep our school flourishing and improving. It is a tough conversation to ask staff who are often pushed to their limit, over-delivering and just barely keeping their head above water to do more with less, but this is the environment the education sector finds itself in. I would like to recognise publicly the professionalism, dedication and tenacity of my colleagues in such in such challenging times.

Uniform

Uniform is an important part of a school's identity. It reinforces who we are as a community and helps allow students to feel pride in their school. It also helps prepare students for life after school where many will have to dress smartly for work. The vast majority of students wear their uniform correctly and look very smart. Thank you to all the parents and carers who have worked with the school by ensuring that their child leaves home correctly dressed or by providing us with a note if there are any problems with uniform.

However, there are still some students who do not wear the uniform correctly and we need parents/carers support with this. All students must always wear their school blazer, skirts should be an appropriate length and sit just above the knee, long socks are not part of the school uniform, so ankle socks or tights only. Please do not leave it to the school to challenge a student about uniform where the primary responsibility remains with parents. At this time of year, we also often start to see more issues with shoes; if your child's shoes have broken or they have outgrown them, we still expect you to replace them and will not permit students to wear trainers.

Students are also not permitted to wear false nails or nail varnish, if your child has this over the holiday then you will need to ensure it is removed before they return, or they will be placed in the Inclusions Room until this is resolved. We also advise that you do not to permit your child to get any piercings over the Easter break as they will have to remove these for PE. A reminder that students may only wear one pair of plain stud earrings, nose studs and additional piercings are not permitted. If you need a reminder on the School Uniform Policy, it can be found via [this link](#).

School uniform can be expensive, so if you are struggling with the cost of uniform, please contact us and we can signpost you to support services. Our OFPA also run a preloved uniform shop. Details can be found on the website, [Second Hand Uniform - Oaklands Catholic School and Sixth Form College](#).

Reminders

In the hope of some warmer weather to come after Easter, please ensure that you send your child into school with a water bottle each day. There are several places around the school to fill these.

Please be reminded that we do not allow chewing gum on the site, so please do not allow your child to bring this into school with them, as we will confiscate and dispose of it and a sanction will be set.

Finally, I would also like to remind parents not to contact your child on their phone during the school day. Mobile phones must be switched off and in bags or pockets from 8.50-3.30pm. We have noticed an increase in students walking around the site during the day wearing earphones/air pods. If staff see this, the items will be confiscated, along with the phone, and placed in the safe in the Inclusions Room, where they will stay until your child can collect them at the end of the school day.

Parking Reminders

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.

At the end of the day, 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. At 3.50pm, you are able to drive on to the school site, around the roundabout then back down the drive. The pick-up point is on the playing field side of the drive. Parents must not stop on the bus shelter side of the driveway or on the roundabout.

However, to ease congestion, parking approximately 10 minutes' walk 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 can then be on your way by approximately 3.40pm rather than waiting until 3.50pm for the gates to open.

Cycling to School

Now that the summer months are on the way, more students may be riding their bikes to school. Whilst I would want to encourage students to cycle, they must wear an appropriate safety helmet. I know from personal experience that a cycle helmet can be a life saver.

Hayling Bus

We have been advised by the Stagecoach Bus Company of their intention to stop the No 30/31 school bus service between Hayling Island and Oaklands Catholic School and return, at the end of this academic year. We are at a loss to understand why they have done this as the service is very popular. Currently their suggested option is to use the public 30/31 bus service to Havant and then change to the service 20 or 39 to Crookhorn Lane. However, this is a longer trip than the direct route. We have challenged this decision, but recent experience tells us that they are unlikely to change their mind. We have sought clarification of the timetable times from September to ascertain journey times to get students who normally use this School Bus service. We have also asked about capacity on the public bus service in the mornings and evenings. We will continue to review this situation and consider other options early in the new term.

We will write to you again as soon as we have clarity on the public bus service and the other options that may be available. In the meantime, if you have any further questions relating to this decision or their proposed solution, please contact Stagecoach direct. Their contact details can be found at the following link [Contact us / Stagecoach](#).

To reiterate, the removal of this service is a decision made by Stagecoach not the school.

Staffing News

Mick Bates has worked as the Design Department Technician at Oaklands for almost 19 years. It is almost impossible to quantify the contribution he has made in that time, but a rough count suggests that he has been involved in some way or another helping to produce 745 GCSE projects and 129 A Level Projects for Design and Technology. Not included in that are all the KS3, Year 10 and Year 12 projects. His enthusiasm to pass on his skills, by working with students on a 1-1 basis has helped so many students make progress and grow in confidence. Mick has had to ensure that the department's equipment is properly maintained, prepared resources for every lesson, made frames for artwork, serviced the sewing machines, shopped for food tech ingredients and much more. In addition, over the years he has been involved in a wide range of projects for the whole the school and for other departments. From the Remembrance Display to the Oscar Romero Prayer Station, items for the Prom, the icons for tutor groups and vast array of other cupboards, bookshelves and miscellaneous items that there is not enough space to list. Mick has also helped out with mini-bus driving for a large number of trips and has regularly fed the fish in the pond by the White House! Mick's expertise, attention to detail, creativity, skill, good humour and willingness to help will be sadly missed and we wish him well in his retirement.

Simon Davis has been an integral part of the Science Department since 2008, bringing a wealth of knowledge and experience to support students and teachers alike. He has played a pivotal role in developing and supplying high quality resources for use in the classroom and in extra-curricular activities, often using his own ingenuity to pro-actively create novel resources to address a gap or need in the curriculum. A great example of this are the kits he produced for the 'earthquake-proof tower building' task, used in the STEM day activities. Simon leaves a lasting legacy in the fabric of the Kolbe block building, having made a significant contribution to the design of the laboratories when these were refurbished, ensuring many thousands of students experience a better learning environment whilst studying Science. In recent years, Simon has supported many students with CREST award projects which have helped to develop their problem-solving skills, understanding of Science and also assist with university applications. Simon will be greatly missed by the Science Department and the Oaklands community and we wish him well in his retirement.

Tim Finch has been the Director of Business and Finance at Oaklands for just over ten years. He has been an exceptional leader and mentor, and from the very first day he led with vision, integrity, and an unwavering commitment to excellence. Under Tim's leadership, there have been many notable successes, not least the millions of pounds he has secured for site improvements and ensuring the financial security of the school during some quite turbulent times. Beyond the business goals and strategies related to the school, what has truly set Tim apart is his ability to connect with people. He has always taken the time to listen, support, and encourage every member of his team. Whether it was navigating challenges, celebrating wins, or simply sharing a laugh over his experiences in the Navy, he has made every moment count. For the next period Tim will work part time with me as CFO for ESCAT. Tim goes from Oaklands with our love blessing and support, he leaves a legacy.

Kyle Ball has been appointed as the new School Business Manager at Oaklands. Kyle comes with a wealth of experience within the education sector and we are pleased to welcome him to the school community and wish him every success in his new role.

We are all certainly looking forward to the two week break, and a chance to recharge the batteries in preparation for the Summer term, which begins for everybody on Tuesday, April 22nd April. I encourage everyone to have a restful and peaceful Easter and to cherish the time spent with loved ones.

Yours sincerely



Mr M Quinn
Headteacher