

9th September 2022



SAINT BEDE'S  
CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

Dear Parents and Carers

I hope that all of our pupils and families had an enjoyable and restful summer break. It was wonderful to welcome our new 'Bedes' in Year 7 on Monday, followed by our returning pupils on Tuesday.

### **Staffing Changes**

I am delighted to welcome four new colleagues to our teaching staff:

- Miss O Bowers – Teacher of RE
- Miss J Clayton – Teacher of Maths
- Miss R Dixon – Teacher of Geography
- Dr V Godley – Teacher of Science

There have also been some changes to our pastoral leadership team. Moving forward, it is intended that Heads of Year and Form Tutors will move up through the school with their groups across their five years at Saint Bede's. Our Head of Year team for 2022/23 is:

- Miss N Rodgers – Head of Year 7
- Mr J Joyce – Head of Year 8
- Mr R Coleman – Head of Year 9
- Mrs P Langley – Head of Year 10
- Mr M Frankel – Head of Year 11

A full list of staff and responsibilities is available on our website.

### **Attendance**

Attendance at school is essential to ensuring children get the most from their school experience spiritually, academically and socially. As I explained in July, following two very challenging years, we are returning to the very highest expectations regarding attendance from the start of this term. **This means children must attend school every day, unless they are too ill to attend or have been given permission to be absent due to an exceptional circumstance,** such as for a medical appointment which you have notified the school about in advance and cannot take place outside of school hours.

Parents/carers commit an offence if their child does not attend school regularly and their absences are classed as unauthorised. They may receive a penalty notice (fine) from the local authority or be prosecuted in some cases. Local authority guidance currently states that a penalty notice may be issued if a child has 5 days (or 10 half days) unauthorised absence in a term, or 7 days (or 14 half days) across two consecutive terms.

I am unable to grant permission for a child to be absent from school during term time unless the circumstances are exceptional. This means that permission will not be granted for holidays during term time due to, for example, parental work commitments or the lower cost of holidays during term time. A penalty notice may be issued immediately if your child is absent during term time for a holiday without permission having been requested or granted by the school.

### **Punctuality**

I would also like to remind you that with effect from Monday we will be introducing a new system of sanctions to encourage punctuality to school in the morning. **Pupils are expected to be in form period or assembly at 8.55am.** From Monday, if your child is late for school in the morning (without a good reason, such as a school bus service running late), they will receive a 15-minute detention at lunchtime on the same day. If your child arrives after 9.10am, the detention will be 30 minutes. If your child arrives after 9.30am, when registers close, in addition to the 30-minute detention this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence for the morning. This means that if a child is frequently late for school after 9.30am, the parent/carer may receive a penalty notice from the local authority as with non-attendance.

If you know that your child is going to be late to school in the morning for a good reason, for example a medical appointment which could not be organised outside of school time, please email [attendance@stbedeslytham.lancs.sch.uk](mailto:attendance@stbedeslytham.lancs.sch.uk) in advance as you would do to report an absence.

### **Uniform**

Thank you for your support with the successful implementation of the new skirt. Please could you also remind your child of the following aspects of our uniform and appearance policy:

- Trousers must be traditional black, straight-leg school trousers. Trousers meeting this description from any retailer can be worn by all pupils, but there is an approved 'girls-fit' trouser option available from our uniform suppliers. Leggings, 'skinny-fit' and fashion trousers are not acceptable.
- Make up, false tans, false eyelashes, eyebrow enhancements, nail varnish and false/acrylic nails are all inappropriate for school and should not be worn. Pupils whose appearance does not meet these expectations **will not be able to attend lessons until the issue is corrected.**
- The blazer is a compulsory item and must be worn at all times, with three exceptions:
  - When pupils are in classrooms during lessons
  - When pupils are seated in the dining room
  - When pupils are outside during break and lunchtime
- Pupils may wear a single small stud in the lobe of each ear, a suitable watch and a crucifix or cross and chain. No other jewellery is permissible. **With effect from Monday, items of jewellery that are not permissible within this policy will be confiscated** and retained by the school office until the end of the day.

### **Mobile Phones**

Please remind your child of our policy in respect of mobile phones and other electronic devices, which was introduced successfully in September 2021 and is unchanged from last year. This means:

- **Mobile phones should be out of sight and switched off from the time a pupil arrives on site at the beginning of the school day until they are leaving the site at the end of the school day.** In the event of a pupil breaching this policy, **the mobile phone will be confiscated** by a member of staff and taken to the school office.
- On the first occasion a pupil breaches this policy, they will be able to collect the mobile phone from the school office at the end of the day. A detention will also be issued.
- On the second and any subsequent occasion a pupil breaches this policy in a single academic year, a parent/carer will be required to collect the mobile phone from the school office at the end of the school day or subsequently. **Please note that in these circumstances the mobile phone will not be returned directly to the pupil, even if this is requested by a parent/carer.** A detention will also be issued.
- No exceptions will be made to this policy on the basis that a mobile phone is necessary for a pupil to travel home, such as due to a Bus Pass 'app'. In such circumstances, the school will make appropriate arrangements for the pupil to travel home safely, such as by allowing the pupil to borrow money for a bus fare from the school.

### **Pupil Grouping**

For the new academic year we have made some changes to our approach to pupil grouping in Years 8 and 9. Pupils are no longer being grouped in linear ability 'sets' from 1-6 or 1-7. Whilst pupils have still been grouped to an extent on the basis of their progress and attainment during the last academic year, these groups are now broader. This approach is designed to increase pupil motivation and remove unnecessary 'ceilings' on ambition, whilst still ensuring pupils are appropriately challenged and supported to achieve their full potential.

For most subjects, pupils have been placed in one of the below groups:

Two parallel 'upper' groups – classes 'S' and 'B'

Three parallel 'middle' groups – classes 'A', 'I' and 'N'

One smaller group, class 'T', for pupils who require more individual and personalised support.

For Music, Technology and PE pupils are taught in smaller mixed-ability groups as has always been the case. All pupils will study PSHCE in their form groups.

Year 7 pupils are being taught in their form groups for all subjects initially (with the exception of Music, Technology and PE where the groups are smaller). This arrangement will continue until October half-term, when pupils will be regrouped in the same way as set out above for Years 8 and 9.

### **School Day**

We have made some changes to the school day on Wednesday, in order to ensure pupils receive a timetabled PSHCE lesson at the same time each week. We are now running a 6-period day on Wednesday only, with each lesson running for 50 minutes rather than 1 hour. The start and end time of the school day, and the length of break and lunch time, are unchanged.

### **Parental Communication**

Staff email addresses are published on our website and email tends to be the most efficient way to contact a member of staff in the first instance. It is also helpful if queries are directed to the most appropriate member of staff:

- For general pastoral and academic matters, please contact your child's Form Tutor in the first instance.
- For matters relating to a specific subject, please contact the relevant class teacher in the first instance.
- You may choose to contact the Head of Year or Head of Department if appropriate, or if you feel your query or concern has not been addressed.
- Please use [head@stbedeslytham.lancs.sch.uk](mailto:head@stbedeslytham.lancs.sch.uk) to contact me. It may be that your query is referred to another member of staff if they are better placed to respond to it.

I would respectfully ask that you bear in mind that many of our staff teach hundreds of pupils each week, and so there is a limit to what is manageable in terms of email correspondence with all of our parents and carers. You can however expect a response if you send an email to the school, generally within two full school days. There may, of course, be occasions where due to staff working patterns, absence or other events in school a response may take a little longer, and I am grateful for your patience in these circumstances.

### **Parent Information Evenings**

We were delighted to see so many of our Year 10 and 11 parents and carers at our Parent Information Evenings on Wednesday. I hope you found the sessions useful, please do offer your feedback by completing the very short survey which will be circulated separately.

We look forward to seeing Year 8 and 9 parents at their events next week, details of which have been issued in a separate letter. Our event for Year 7 parents and carers will take place on 5th October.

Thank you for all your support in ensuring a successful start to the academic year. I look forward to working with you over the year ahead, and to seeing you in school at the various events which will take place. I will also continue to provide a weekly email update for parents and carers, the first of which will be published next Friday 16th September.

Yours sincerely

Mr P Marsden  
Headteacher