

Dear Parent/Carer,

I hope your child has had a good start to Year 7 and is settling into St Damian's. This is a very important year in their education as they get their time at St Damian's off to a great start. Speaking to the pupils on a daily basis I know that they 'love' the school and as Headteacher I am determined to ensure that this success continues. The purpose of this letter is to outline some important information.

GCSE Results

Firstly, I am pleased to announce that St Damian's has again achieved high academic standards. 67% of our pupils achieved 5A*- C including English & Maths. This is a slight dip from last year, but is still the second best exam results in the History of the school. This is a result of hard work from both our wonderful pupils and my great staff. Behind these headline figures, a record 79% of pupils achieved Maths, with 1 in 4 pupils achieving A*/A. Our English results were also above the National Average. Our Ebac 'qualification' also increased showing that we are providing a strong academic curriculum. As a school, it is our intention that pupil outcomes are our top priority.

Work Hard 'Attitude'

It is vital that your child continues to work hard and develops a positive attitude towards their studies immediately. This also applies to homework, ensuring that it is completed to a high standard and handed in on time. I am pleased to say that in the first few weeks this has been the case and I expect that this enthusiasm continues throughout the remainder of the year.

Meeting Parents and Tour of School

As Headteacher I believe that 'working closely together' will ensure your child achieves their full potential. If there are any issues please contact Mrs Gerschler, Head of Year. If the matter is not resolved to your satisfaction please contact my PA, Mrs Biggs (0161 331 4752) in order to arrange a convenient appointment. Sorting 'issues' out, before they become 'problems', is key to our continued success! Likewise, if you would like a 'tour' of the school during the working day please contact Mrs Biggs for a convenient time.

Parental Questionnaire Responses

Last year after every parents evening, parents were asked to complete a questionnaire about the school. These were collated and the responses were overwhelmingly positive. Out of 295 returns, 291 parents said they would recommend the school to another parent and of the responses 3671 were positive whilst only 86 were 'negative'. This is exceptionally high by any standards and shows great confidence in the school. It is my intention that this trust in the school by parents continues.

Behaviour

The behaviour of our pupils is excellent. This is due to strong Leadership, high expectations, focus on standards, high quality teaching, a clear rewards system, and importantly, pupils wanting to do well! I will not tolerate repeated poor behaviour by *any* pupil. It simply is not fair for a few pupils to 'ruin' the education of others. Pupils know the expectations and standards that I expect. These are simple, fair, accepted and based upon the important value of respect! Ofsted said *'the vast majority of students behave courteously and enjoy positive relationships with their peers and with school staff'*. This is a credit to the pupils at St Damian's and makes us proud to be their teachers! Can I also remind parents that the school has powers to regulate behaviour of pupils travelling to and from school.

Liturgical Life of Our School

We have started our school year by putting our faith at the centre of school life. As God is at the heart of our community, Years 8 to 11 have celebrated together during their Welcome Masses to pray for another successful year and the opportunity to develop our talents. Year 7 will also have this opportunity at their Welcome Mass on the **23rd October 2013**. Parents and Carers are invited to attend and celebrate the start of their child's journey as part of the St Damian's Community.

Uniform and Hair

I am delighted that our pupils look extremely smart in uniform. A high standard of uniform is a reflection that the pupils are proud to be at St Damian's. Last year a small minority of pupils had 'hair styles' that were not permitted. Can I remind parents that unnatural hair colour is not acceptable. Pupils are aware of what is acceptable. 'Challenging' pupils with unacceptable hair styles simply wastes energy and learning time of the pupil [and staff]. For Year 7 the uniform policy states that the pupils must have a clip-on tie. These can be purchased from any of the schools uniform suppliers. Please support the school as we maintain high standards in all our pursuits, including uniform and hair.

Attendance

St Damian's has a fantastic attendance record, indicating that pupils want to, and indeed, enjoy attending St Damian's. It is even more important that attendance becomes a priority in Year 7 and the target should be 100%. Can I also ask that you **do not** take pupils on holidays during term time as permission will not be granted. See attached letter.

Open Evening

This takes place on **Monday 30th September from 6.30pm**. This is an excellent evening to 'show-off' St Damian's and its pupils. Although primarily aimed at parents of Years 5 & 6, I am offering an open invitation for you attend the evening. The school will shut early that day at 1.30pm in order that we can prepare for the 'show-case' evening. Please come along and see for yourself.

Parking

Can I also use this opportunity to ask parents NOT to park in the bus lane when dropping off or collecting their children. This is putting our children at risk. Indeed, I would prefer if you did not enter the school car park during the busy morning and after school period if possible. Your cooperation in this matter is greatly appreciated.

Finally I would like to thank you for your continued support and I can assure you that my staff, my Leadership team, the very proactive governing body and I are absolutely committed in ensuring that when they leave St Damian's they will achieve outstanding academic qualifications.

I look forward to meeting you very soon.

Yours sincerely

Mr S Logue
Headteacher