



4 December 2023

Dear Parents, Carers and families,

First of all, may I wish you many graces and blessings in this time of Advent. The preparation time and the opportunity to be mindful of our closeness to God, our care for one another and the internal preparation for the focus on the Nativity events is something we should really cherish.

It is also coming up to a year now since I joined the Academy to serve you and your families as Principal and so I say a very heartfelt thanks for your support and prayers over this time. I am really proud to serve our community and I am particularly pleased that the outcomes of the Academy reached a positive Progress 8 score (+0.05) for the first time ever. The significant changes to the curriculum, the additional lesson time/reduction of wasted time, split lunch times and the opening up of opportunities to use school facilities have certainly had a positive impact too.

Personal pride at St Paul's

One of the ways that you can really help us as an Academy to keep expectations and standards high is to support your child by ensuring uniforms are excellent. In particular we do not permit:

- Jewellery and make-up (particularly false eyelashes and nail extensions/nail varnish)
- Perfumes and Aerosols (to ensure we safeguard those with medical conditions)
- Hoodies / Face masks and snoods to cover the face
- Any coats around the building and in lessons

To support our students in the colder weather, our heating is on in the school every day and we are looking to fix windows where there may be a cold draft. If students would like to wear an additional layer to their shirts/jumpers/blazers and coat outside this would be a good idea. A plain white T Shirt or PE style 'skins' are ideal and fairly affordable.

Christmas events to be aware of and support as families

There will be some events where there is a charitable focus to support our local foster care services, our local care home and British Red Cross to support humanitarian aid and support for those living in conflict.

To raise some funds and acquire funds for Bexley Foster Care we will be holding these events:

- a) Heads of Year will be celebrating a Christmas Jumper / Top / Embellished school jumper day on **Wednesday 13 December**. Students must wear their other ordinary uniform items with their Christmas jumper. There will be a contribution for this (unless a student remains in full school uniform) of £1 which will be collected at the gates.



- b) A selection of students will be packing shopping and asking for donations in return from shoppers at Morrisons. (Letter and Permission slips will be sent to students who are leading this).
- c) The choir and some members of the Chaplaincy team will sing at the Weybourne Care Home.
- d) Form Classes will be put together to get a few items to create gift baskets of toys for young people who are supported by Bexley Foster Care.
- e) Donations for the Food Bank: If you are able to make donations please send in items with your child. Cans, dried foods, bags of pasta and rice are ideal.
- f) On the last day of term (**Thursday 21 December**) there will be an 'own clothes' event. If a student would like to make a **voluntary** donation of any spare change, this will be added to our donations to the charities we support this year.

Our prayer and reflection times each day during Advent will reflect on the scripture and the value of peace, hope, joy and love in our lives and there will be special liturgies for all year groups in the last week of term as part of their assembly programme.

End of Term Arrangements:

The last day of term is **Thursday 21 December**

KS4 Classes will be dismissed at 11.30am

KS3 Classes will be dismissed at 11.45am

There will be no restaurant sitting that day but a meal will be provided to all students who are eligible for Free School Meals.

Students should leave the site promptly and make their way home and leave the local area in a calm and orderly way. Please can you reinforce this message.

All staff and students will return to school on Monday 8 January 2024.

Adverse Weather and School Closure Arrangements

We are lucky we live in a time when there are many things that keep the country moving and operating even in severe weather such as snow/ice. As a fundamental principle, every effort must be made to prepare for ice/snow and to keep the Academy open. If we do experience severe weather resulting in hazardous and unsafe conditions, we may have to take the decision to close the Academy.

Once a decision is made to close, we will:

- Post a message on the Academy website by 6.45am or as soon as possible.
- Send a message to parents via Edulink/e-mail/Google Classroom
- We will update the website regularly to keep parents/carers, staff and students informed about arrangements for the following day.

If the school is open but you feel the journey is not safe for your son/daughter, please contact the Academy to report the absence in the usual manner. Our Google Classrooms will have ample work set for students to complete to minimise any loss of learning.

I wish you God's Graces and blessings for the weeks ahead as we move to celebrate that moment in history when the God, who has always found ways to see us out, came and found us in person. God emptied himself to live amongst us - that says a lot about the depth of his love and care for us!

God bless you and your families,

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Mrs Ward".

Mrs Ward
Principal