



ST MARGARET WARD CATHOLIC ACADEMY



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01Z/EndofTermLetter/DM/EP

Wednesday 18th December 2019

Dear Parent/Carer,

As we approach the end of term and another calendar year, I would like to thank you once again for your ongoing support of the school. Particularly last week when it was necessary to close in order to have a deep clean and allow staff and students to recover from the many illnesses that have affected so many of us over the last few weeks. We had hoped to make it through to the end of term but unfortunately, after seeking advice, this became unsustainable. I hope you were not unduly inconvenienced by the closure; the school has been thoroughly cleaned and disinfected and the number of our community off with illness has significantly fallen since our return.

I would also like to thank you for the support that many of you gave to the Christmas Fayre, it was a wonderful occasion and one that helped to raise money for our PTFA, and for causes close to our hearts including CAFOD and the Donna Louise Trust. Some fundraising events will continue into the early weeks of next term, any donations, sponsorship or support can be sent into school as normal or paid on Tucasi for convenience.

Thank you also to those of you that joined us for our Dance show and for the Christmas Concert, we are very proud to be able to celebrate the talent, success and hard work of our students and it is wonderful to have your support on these occasions. Our Music Department have also given us another reason to be proud of them having just received notification that we have again been awarded the Platinum Excellence in Music Provision Award by the Stoke-On-Trent City Music Service. We were delighted to be told...

'This is the highest award presented by The Music Partnership and is a credit to the amazing work that takes place in your school and the work that you do to support schools in your Collegiate and across the City. St Margaret Ward Catholic Academy are currently the only school in the City to hold this level of award'.

Throughout this term we have been focussed on embedding the 'St Margaret Ward Way' and our young people have responded exceptionally well to our new system, the vast majority deserve great credit for the way they present and conduct themselves daily at St Margaret Ward Catholic Academy and I would like to thank them for their ongoing efforts.

The past 18 months have been spent reviewing and evaluating every area of the school, often with external support in order to make improvements. The feedback and self-evaluation we have done has led to a number of changes; the introduction of the 'St Margaret Ward Way', changes to the curriculum, and the physical improvements we are making to make the site more secure are three examples of how we are acting on this.

Our school improvement plan for 2019-20 was written throughout the summer term and took effect from September. We have chosen the words of Saint Teresa of Calcutta 'Together we can do great things' as our strapline for the year and the priorities are summarised in the headlines below;

If you require this information in a different format, please contact the school.



School Improvement Plan 2019-20 - 'Together we can do great things.'

Faith in the Presence of God (Personal Development)

'To inspire our community to become Lasallian people of God.'

Respect for all persons (Behaviour and Attitudes)

'To inculcate the 'St Margaret Ward Way' of Excellence becoming a habit.'

Quality Education (Quality Education)

'To provide high quality learning experiences for all through a powerful knowledge-based culture.'

Inclusive Community (Leadership)

'To demonstrate and develop excellence in leadership throughout the school.'

Concern for the Poor and Social Justice (Outcomes)

'To promote and secure high outcomes for all.'

We have already seen positive impact in the school; students are smarter, more polite and helpful, and the school is calmer and more purposeful. Visitors comment on how well-mannered and well behaved our students are and at any events where students represent our school, which is many, our students are always praised for their conduct and positivity. A recent example of this can be found in an email I received from the Course Director at the Outward-Bound Trust in Loch Eil, Scotland praising our students and staff after our visit earlier this month...

'... I just wanted to drop you a quick line to say how impressed I was with your students. Myself and the other instructor both agreed that these were some of our favourite students we had worked with for a number of reasons:

- 1. Their politeness and respect to not only our centre staff, but other students on site*
- 2. Their gratitude to the opportunity that has been presented to them*
- 3. Their willingness to embrace challenge, learn from it and apply it to the next task*
- 4. Their positivity around a challenging weather week.*

From working with your staff, it's clear the school goes above and beyond for your young people...'

They really were a credit to us and we are fortunate to have some excellent staff and so many students to be proud of.

We have also recently been inspected by the Archdiocese of Birmingham who visited us in November. We are still awaiting the final report which I will share it with you when I receive it in the New Year, however, the initial feedback has been very positive, the improvements have been recognised and they have been very supportive of the approach we have taken.

It is also important to recognise that there is always more we can do as a school for our students and we should always look to find ways to continually improve. We also know that some habits take time and persistence to change. As a staff we have spent time this year carefully evaluating how we operate and what we value and this has led to thorough planning in order to make the changes we have introduced from September.

Student views are sought frequently through pupil interviews as part of our review processes and through the Academy Council and now we would very much like to hear from you. I would be very grateful, if you could spare a few minutes to complete the short parent questionnaire which can be found on 'Survey Monkey' and accessed by following this link; <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/6CQPDRF>.

I realise that Christmas is a very busy time for many so the questionnaire will be made accessible for the next 3 weeks and will be live until **the end of the day on Friday 10th January 2020** which is the end of the first week back.

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After Christmas, as part of our focus on improving the school, we be joining the rest of the Newman Catholic Collegiate schools and will be going fully cashless from January. Now that the vast majority of families top up monies online using Tucasi our cash collection boxes will soon be removed from the school building. Therefore, we will be phasing out the facility to add cash to your account via the money loaders in school from January. If you have not already registered, do not have access to a bank account or cannot go online please contact our Academy Manager, Mrs E Stanway for further assistance.

This term has been a long, busy but very successful one. Our Year 11 and 13 students have completed their first Mock exams and have prepared and conducted themselves very well throughout. Might I remind Year 11 parents and carers that their Parents' evening is on **Wednesday 8th January** and reports will be available for collection on the evening. Our Sixth Form Parents Evening is the following week on **Thursday 16th January**.

May I also remind you that school closes to students on **Friday 20th December at 12.30pm** and reopens to everyone on **Monday 6th January**. I hope you have a very happy, peaceful and holy Christmas and wish you all well for the new year.

Mr D McKenna
Principal

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