



Newsletter

Number 38 – May 2016



Welcome to the May Newsletter. Good luck to all our Year 11 and 10 pupils sitting their exams as the exam season has now well and truly started. Below is a comprehensive revision schedule and we encourage parents to support us by ensuring that your child attends. School closes on Friday 27th for a well-deserved half term break for both pupils and staff and we return to school on Monday 6th June 2016. When we return it will be the final half term of the academic year but nonetheless it will still be very busy! As I said in my last letter to all parents, I hope that it will be a half term be filled with sunshine. Planned activities in this term include: Year 11 Prom, trips day, sports day and our annual fantastic Share Day. We will also be delighted to welcome our new Year 7 cohort for September 2016 on Induction Evening, Tuesday 21st June and Year 6 Induction Day, Friday 1st July 2016.

As I said, the GCSE exams have started and our Year 11's are working extremely hard, both in school and at home. All my staff are working tremendously hard and giving up a great deal of their own time to ensure our pupils, your children, achieve their very best. On behalf of them all and the governors, a simple 'GOOD LUCK!'

Year 11 'Out of Hours' Revision

Saturday 4th June - Maths - 9:30am – 1:00pm

Saturday 11th June - Science - 10am – 12noon

Half Term

Tuesday 31st May – English – RTU, SBH, DGN & NTR - 10:00am – 12 noon

Tuesday 31st May – KLE's History Group – 10:00am – 12:30pm

Tuesday 31st May 2016 – VBT's Geography Group – 9:30am – 11:30am

Wednesday 1st June – Maths – 9:30am – 1:00pm

Thursday 2nd June – MBS English Group - 9:00am – 12:30pm

Thursday 2nd June – LSK - Geography Group – 10:00am – 12:30pm

Thursday 2nd June – FBY – Food Technology Group – 12:30pm – 2:00pm

Friday 3rd June - History – AMH & HSS - 9:00am – 12 noon

Maths: Please ensure your child has a Casio scientific calculator. It is important all pupils in all year groups have the same make as each calculator works differently. Time is wasted if the teacher needs to respond to several different problems concerning how to use a variety of different calculators in the lesson. The Maths department will buy back Casio calculators in a reasonable condition when pupils leave at the end of Year 11. The cost of a calculator is £5.50 and we will buy them back for £3.00

Year 11's: On Friday 27th May 2016, the Year 11's will have their Leavers Mass in the school hall at 12.00pm. All parents are welcome to come and celebrate the occasion. A letter has been handed out to all pupils with a reply slip that needs to be returned ASAP so we can make sure we can accommodate everyone. Pupils are expected back into school, week commencing Monday 6th June 2016 for revision classes or exams unless other arrangements have been agreed with myself.

On Friday 1st July 2016, the Year 11's will celebrate one last time as the Class of 2016 at the White Hart Hotel, Lydgate. All pupils allowed at the Prom have been given their formal invite from Mr Burtles. Can pupils please bring their money into school as soon as possible, thank you.



BBC Micro:bits a success with Yr 7s Year 7s have been expanding their programming skills with a new mini- computer called a Micro:bit. They have been given to St Damian's by the BBC as part of an initiative to get more young people interested in programming. The Micro:bit has an awful lot of features for such a small device – 25 LED lights that can display text, two programmable buttons, it can detect motion and sense which way it is moving. The Micro:bit is also fitted with Bluetooth so it can interact with smartphones. The programming possibilities are endless. Mr Hallsworth, Head of ICT, was quick to praise the Micro:bit and its impact saying *"The Micro:bits have given programming a new dimension that has really grabbed the pupils' imaginations. These devices will encourage the technology professionals of the future."*

The Pupil Learning Forum continue to work enthusiastically to support KS3 pupils selected to attend Homework and Intervention clubs. There has been a 'Gold Tie' focus this term on 'High Standards of Presentation'. This has included the delivery of PLF Assemblies to show pupils the importance of maintaining high standards of presentation for quality revision and high standards of achievement. The 'Gold Ties' have visited form groups to select pupils in recognition of their high quality presentation. These pupils will be rewarded in year assemblies' week commencing 23rd May.

Pupil Chaplaincy: All Members of the pupil chaplaincy team are now visible in their purple ties. This shows the pride and stature that they are held in around the school. Our focus now is beginning to look towards the fantastic Share Day and what events will be taking place. Watch this space!

The Liturgy Group have been active in raising both awareness and money for the Willow Wood Hospice this half term. This has culminated in a "wear it green" day on Thursday 19th May where we raised over £600. This is a charity which is close to many of our community's hearts. Thanks to all who organised and contributed.

The Year 10 STEM Challenge Day at Fairfield High School for Girls Two teams from the year 10 Biology class represented St Damian's in the Stem Challenge day. Over 20 schools were represented from the Tameside area. They had to work as a team to use their STEM skills to solve a murder mystery. The day consisted of activities which will included: Coding, The Periodic Table, Structures, and A secret 4th task. The students worked extremely well and their natural flair for science was commented on by the organisers.

The students worked so well that they came in **FIRST** and **THIRD** place. A massive well done and a big congratulations to; Anneliese McKay, Jaime Lowe, Millie Hepplestone, Hannah Roche, Jessica Finan, Daniel Howard, Gerald Herman, Josef Crompton. The Science staff are so proud of them.

Duke of Edinburgh A meeting was held on Thursday 12th May for parents and pupils about our upcoming expedition. We were joined by Maurice Chadwick and Andy Ross who will be leading the expedition. Pupils were excited to hear about our plans to visit Castleton for our expedition in June and parents were able to ask questions about tents, kit list and the meals they can plan as a group. Pupils are now encouraged to meet with their groups to discuss their plans. We hope that our pupils and parents found the evening useful and will look forward to seeing the pupils complete their bronze award next month. Keep up the hard work Year 9!



Year 8 Tag Rugby Team Our Yr 8 Girls Tag Rugby A and B teams were crowned **CHAMPIONS** of Tameside taking gold and silver at the Tameside School Tournament on the 17th May! The girls will now go on to represent Tameside at the Greater Manchester School Games on 6th July at the country level competition. The girls were fantastic - some of them had never represented school on a team before so it was an extra special achievement !





Sow, Grow, Eco! The Technology and Computing departments have come together to share with the students the enjoyment of growing, nurturing and producing your own food. We have spent time with the help of the Yr. 10 Food Technology students planting a variety of crops including tomatoes, chilies, cucumbers, potatoes, peppers,



sweetcorn, pumpkins, strawberries, rhubarb and loganberries, all of which will be used in food practical's or used as lunchtime taste testing samples. We are also trying to be eco-friendly by creating our own compost, using an automated watering system and cultivating a wild flower garden to attract insects and bees. Don't forget to watch our progress on twitter or even better send us your tips and advice: you can even donate seeds or plants!

Inclusion Quality Mark: St. Damian's has applied to be assessed for the **Inclusion Quality Mark**. Our work will be examined by external assessors to see whether we are meeting the ever changing needs of a diverse learning community in delivering an inclusive education. The assessment will last two days and will involve time spent with governors, teaching staff, pupils and parents. We are confident that assessors will see evidence of how we are ensuring that all pupils, whatever their age, gender, ethnicity, attainment and background have the best provision possible in school to meet their needs. St Damian's prides itself in being an educationally inclusive school in which the teaching and learning, achievements, attitudes and well-being of every young person matters. This is supported by our strong Catholic ethos which takes account of and supports pupils' varied life experiences and needs.

The LionHeart Challenge: We were delighted to welcome once again "The Lion Heart Challenge" team and representatives from GMP to our school on Tuesday 17th May. The GMP LionHeart Challenge Programme 2015/16 was an opportunity for our Year 9's to experience a completely different way of working. The team was joined this year by GMP, who sent along five police officers to work alongside our amazing students who inspired every adult with their brilliant ideas and caring and thoughtful ideas for those who are disadvantaged in our local community. The whole year group spent the day together in the hall divided into fourteen competing teams, a great day for developing skills in Team Building, Marketing, Design Concepts and Finance. Their fantastic work will be displayed for all shortly. Awards were given to 6 teams who excelled in all disciplines but perhaps the most exciting was Team 7 who won overall and who will now represent us in the North West Final. Watch this space! We received glowing compliments from the visitors who always comment on the tremendous work, attitude and behaviour of our pupils and staff and the warm welcome and hospitality of our whole school community.

"We were so, so delighted to be working with you and your Students again!"

Year 10 Raising Aspirations Programme Recently, the Year 10 Grand Finale event sadly marked the end of our Year 10 Raising Aspirations programme for 2016. Over last term, students have benefitted from opportunities to 'try-out' A-Level subjects in a college environment, develop their sixth form study skills through workshops and submission of an academic assignment, and have learned more about their post-16 and post-18 pathways through sessions by our own Careers team and the University of Leeds. The participating students have shown an extraordinary commitment to travel into college after school on Monday evenings, and the conversations I've had with some of the participants show them to be motivated and enthusiastic students, well done!

Parking: Time and time again, I am contacted by residents on the St Albans Estate who have expressed concern about the way parents are parking when they collect their children. Cars are double parked, driveways are blocked and cars are parked on double yellow lines. Please be considerate to the local Community. Ask yourself the question 'Would you like someone parking outside your house in this manner'? **Please park considerately.**

The importance of your child's attendance at school

We wish to thank all parents for your support with attendance and punctuality. Our school target is 97% and we are currently achieving 96%. Having a good education will help to give your child the best possible start in life. Children who miss school even for a short period are taking a risk because; they will possibly miss vital work in school and may have difficulty in catching up with others. If your child is away from school for any reason it will have an impact

on their learning. There is a link between poor attendance and low levels of achievement. 3 day's absence in a month due to illness would still mean your child may be counted as a persistent absentee.

What can you do to help good attendance?

- Use common sense when deciding whether your child needs to stay at home. If your child is absent in the morning, but improves, do not hesitate to bring/send them into school as they will receive a present mark. Please remember that early morning aches often pass, so don't keep your child at home "just in case" when they could be learning in class.
- If your child is absent from school contact the Attendance team before 9 am on the first day of absence by telephone, followed up with a written note on return. Only school, not a parent can authorise an absence.
- If you need a medical appointment try and make it out of school hours. Make sure the Attendance team knows in advance if your child has a doctor's or dentist appointment, please send into school copy of medical letters or dental cards for our records.

Contact Details: Please make sure that school has your correct and up to date contact details i.e. mobile number, home and work's number, it is important that the school can contact you.

Term Dates 2016/2017

AUTUMN TERM	First Day	Last Day	
INSET DAY	*Monday 5 th September 2016		School closed
Autumn 1 st Term	Tuesday 6 th September 2016	Friday 21 st October 2016	Pupils in school
Half term holidays	Monday 24 th October 2016	Friday 28 th October 2016	School closed
INSET DAY	*Friday 25 th November 2016		School closed
Autumn 2 nd Term	Monday 31 st October 2016	Tuesday 20 th December 2016	Pupils in school

SPRING TERM	First Day	Last Day	
Spring 1 st Term	Wednesday 4 th January 2017	Friday 17 th February 2017	Pupils in school
Half term holidays	Monday 20 th February 2017	Friday 24 th February 2017	School closed
INSET DAY	*Friday 17 th March 2017		School closed
Spring 2 nd Term	Monday 27 th February 2017	Friday 31 st March 2017	Pupils in school
Easter Holidays	Monday 3 rd April 2017	Monday 17 th April 2017*	School closed

*Easter Sunday is 16th April 2017, pupils will return on the Tuesday 18th April 2017 due to Easter Monday

SUMMER TERM	First Day	Last Day	
Summer 1 st Term	Tuesday 18 th April 2017	Friday 26 th May 2017	Pupils in school
MAY BANK HOLIDAY	*Monday 1 st May 2017		School closed
Half term holidays	Monday 29 th May 2017	Friday 2 nd June 2017	School closed
Summer 2 nd Term	Monday 5 th June 2017	Friday 21 st July 2017**	Pupils in school

** It is anticipated that Autumn term 2017/18 will commence Monday 4th September 2017