Dear Parents/Carers

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Headteacher

Mr S Logue BA (Hons), MEd., NPQH, NPQEL

Welcome to my monthly newsletter that showcases all things St Damian's. Firstly, I would like to say that it has been a fantastic start to the year. I am really pleased with the attitude and conduct of the students of St Damian's. They REALLY are a credit to you and I am proud that they are true ambassadors for this community. I promise that my staff and I will endeavour to ensure that they get a first-class holistic Catholic education. Enjoy reading!

Message from the Head Boy and Head Girl

In this newsletter I have asked the Head Boy and Head Girl to write a few sentences regarding their time at St Damian's.

✓ Frazer Huish-Patel, Head Boy. During my 5 years at St Damians, I have learnt a lot of things that have helped to improve my knowledge of the world around me and prepare me for my GCSEs.

Outside of the classroom I have participated in many extra-curricular clubs like the Liturgy team and have served as a Language Leader. These have helped me to develop valuable skills which can be used throughout my later life such as teamwork, problem solving and leadership. As Head Boy I have helped during parent, options and open evenings, all of which have built my confidence in public speaking.



✓ Eva Danko, Head Girl. I have been attending St Damian's for 5 years now and it has been cram packed with all sorts of fun leadership opportunities and activities, which have shaped me into who I am today. In Yr7 I was lucky to be picked as a member of the student council. This

gave me the opportunities to build my confidence to speak in front of audiences and helped me to be able to ask for help when needed. Additionally, this confidence inspired me to apply for Head Girl. During my time here I have helped out at open evenings, building my communication and problem solving skills to efficiently guide parents and help teachers. In Yr10 I was given to chance to go to Oxford, with a number of my peers and this inspired me to achieve high and realise that if you put the work in for my GCSE's anybody can go to these universities.

Catholic Life of the School

I am delighted to report that Mrs Allmand continues in the same vein as her predecessor Mrs Gerschler and has continued to promote the Catholic Mission at St Damian's.

Staff Formation. On INSET day, Mrs Allmand led a session on the importance of staff formation. This aims to educate teachers in their understanding and living out of the Catholic faith, enabling them to integrate it into their teaching and interactions with students. Mrs Allmand spoke about the different opportunities for prayer at St Damian's and the role that staff play. Each day students start with the school prayer and then during the week pupils are involved in form time reflections, chapel reflections and Friday 3pm prayer.



Competition Winners! I am pleased to announce that two students have won the Salford Diocese Jubilee art competition. Amelia Kerek's artwork won the Key Stage 3 category, with Emmanuella Kuye earning a runner-up award. Entries were judged by the Diocesan education, formation, and environment teams,















with Bishop John making the final decisions. The winning works will be displayed at the Cathedral Centre. Well done to all participants!

■ GIFT Team. During September students were encouraged to apply to be members of our strong GIFT team. The GIFT team stands for 'Growing In Faith Together'. Each year group will develop a different aspect of Catholic life and mission at school and be led by different members of the RE team. This is as follows: Yr7 & Yr8 - GIFT team/Prayer life &

liturgical worship with Miss Yates, Yr9 Eco group with Mrs Lowe and Yr10 Caritas charity work with Mrs Allmand.



• Yr10 Caritas Group. They have successfully been chosen for student leadership after completion of an application form. They will take the lead in planning and delivering fundraising initiatives at St Damian's. Their commitment to service and leadership will inspire the school community to make a positive impact. We look forward to their upcoming projects!

- Season of Creation. This runs from 1st September (World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation) to 4th October (The feast of Saint Francis of Assisi) and is dedicated to prayer and action for the protection of creation in the Catholic Church. It is a time to renew our relationships with God and with all creation. In RE lessons during September we studied the creation stories in the Bible and what it teaches about stewardship and the role of humans.
- Staff Formation: On Wednesday, 24th September, the RE team hosted a workshop for teaching staff to deepen their understanding of living out the Catholic faith. Mrs. Allmand also highlighted the new Prayer & Liturgy directory expectations, including how to lead pupil-led prayer. The session emphasized the quote, "We plant seeds that one day will grow."



Save the Date. Our traditional Carol Service will take place on Monday 15th December 6pm. This is a night not to be missed. Watch this space for further details.



■ CARITAS AWARD – A huge thank you to all of our Caritas pupils for the brilliant way they supported the Macmillan Coffee Morning. They all showed kindness, teamwork and maturity, and we are very proud of them. This month's Caritas Award goes to Gabriel Roberts, who really stood out for using his initiative. He showed confidence, experience in working with the community, and a real willingness to go above and beyond. Well done, Gabriel!

Safeguarding Updates

Educating Staff. We invited 'Branching Out' to our last safeguarding briefing. They provided an overview of the service they provide, which supports young people in Tameside facing mental health challenges. She discussed the various ways the service helped and highlighted key resources used with young people, such as CBT-based tools, creative outlets, and interactive workshops. The session covered how to refer young people to the service, including the referral criteria,



process, and assessment. Additionally, they offered guidance on how to have effective conversations with young people, emphasising active listening, a non-judgmental approach, respecting boundaries, and building rapport. The session allowed staff to feel equipped with the











knowledge and skills to engage with young people and support their mental health and well-being.

- UNITE. Mrs Gerschler has been in Yr7-Yr10 assemblies this week to raise awareness of the safeguarding team and to share our UNITE safety procedure with students. UNITE is designed to be implemented quickly in the event of an emergency and is our lockdown protocol. Key messages were shared with students including when hearing the 'UNITE' across the Tannoy, all staff and students are to remain in their classrooms during this time and remain calm. If the 'UNITE' Tannoy is heard at break or lunch students and staff move to their next lesson to be registered. SLT will be in designated areas across the school, assisting in the management of the alert. It's important that everyone remains calm and helps each other during the UNITE procedure. There will be practices of this procedure during the year. Please refer to the school website for more details.
- Online Safety. As our students spend more time online, we educate them on staying safe while
 on-line. The 4 C's is an easy way to keep your child safe and support the school.
 - I. Content: Children may be exposed to harmful or inappropriate online content, such as pornography, fake news, racism, and extremism. It's vital to be aware of what they might encounter and ensure safe online spaces.
 - **II. Contact:** Risks also arise from interactions with others online, such as peer pressure, inappropriate advertising, or adult predators posing as children for grooming or exploitation.
 - III. Conduct: Online behaviour plays a major role in safety. Behaviours like online bullying or sharing inappropriate images can harm young people. It's important to encourage respectful and responsible use of technology.
- IV. Commerce: Children and young people may face risks related to online gambling, financial scams, or phishing. Awareness is key to protect them from commercial exploitation and financial harm.

I encourage all parents to be vigilant and have open conversations about online safety. Don't assume that it doesn't apply to your child. Together, we can support our students in navigating the digital world safely.

World Mental Health Day - Thursday 10th October

As a school, we will be joining thousands of others across the country in support of **World Mental Health Day**. This initiative is an opportunity to show young people that they are not alone with their mental health. Students are invited to add **an item of yellow**





to their school uniform on the day. Donations in support of this cause can be kindly made via ParentMail. Please support this worthy cause.

St Damian's proudly walks with the 'Baton of Hope'

On Friday 12th September, a group of staff and students took part in the 'Baton of Hope', the UK's



biggest suicide prevention initiative. The Baton travelled through Tameside, bringing people together in an inspiring day of remembrance, reflection, and hope. Students walked up to Hartshead Pike, where they shared their own heartfelt messages of hope with volunteers and supporters, many of whom had been personally affected by mental health and suicide. It was a truly moving and powerful experience, one that left a lasting impression on all who attended. The day reminded us of the importance of compassion, openness, and community spirit. This event will not be forgotten, by











those who carried with them a strong message of hope for the future. It reminded me of one of the 'slogans' on the wall at St Damian's which says 'in a world you can be anything, be kind'. And remember, IT IS GOOD TO TALK.

GCSE Outcomes

Each year Tameside collates the GCSE outcomes of every secondary school in the borough. This looks at 9 different key indicators, including Grade 4 and 5 in English/Maths, attainment 8 and Ebacc entries/outcomes. I am delighted to report that St Damian's came TOP in every single measure. This is down to quality teaching and high expectations, underpinned by exceptional pastoral care. I am proud of the staff who consistently produce exceptional GCSE outcomes that ensures our children, your child, has access to the best courses post-16.

Open Evening. Hope, Making a Difference



Wow! What another great evening that allowed use to showcase this strong united learning community. Yet again, our exceptional students and staff showed what an amazing community we have here at St Damian's. Oral feedback from the evening was extremely positive as everyone enjoyed eating the cakes from food technology, making explosive cans in Science and

listening to our amazing school choir. It was lovely to see so many Yr5/6 students from our local primary schools. Don't forget anyone who would like a place from September 2026 must submit their application by 31st October 2025 and to send a copy of their Baptismal certificate to St Damian's, care of Mrs Biggs.



Behaviour at St Damian's

At the beginning of the school term the Education Secretary, Bridget Phillipson, called on the support of parents to improve behaviour in schools across the country. I welcome this as it is timely and appropriate in the sense that the staff at St Damian's need parents to support our 5 simple, effective and transparent rules. For clarity,

- The behaviour of the vast majority of our students is outstanding, and they should be commended on being a credit to this community and to you as their parent.
- Our 5 rules are non-negotiable and apply to *all* students. These rules ensure that our environment is conducive to learning and provides a safe and happy space where our great students thrive.
- Students who repeatedly undermine the rules are putting their place at risk. It is not fair for any student to disrupt the learning of another student.

St Damian's is a school that has high expectations in all we do. That includes student conduct. The outcomes of our expectations are there for all to see and the people who benefit from this is our students/your children. In fact, every external visitor comments on the atmosphere of the school. I thank parents for their overwhelming support. If you want to tour the school during the day to see this community in action, please contact Mrs Biggs for a time.

Curriculum. A focus on Maths

Our Maths GCSE results were, once again, outstanding. Year on year, this department delivers the best grades for our great children. They also push and challenge our brightest Mathematicians through the following extra sessions.













✓ Yr11. This year's Mathematicians have embraced the Further Maths GCSE with discipline and determination with over 20 students giving up their own time each Friday at 8am. Mr McCallion said "This is a testament to their drive and determination to succeed". They will study a variety of GCSE and A-Level topics to broaden their understanding and helping to bridge this gap of Maths after GCSE. Topics include Matrices, Calculus

and Trigonometric Identities whilst also exposing students to grade 9 questions relevant to their GCSEs. Last year a remarkable 70% of students sitting the Further Maths exam achieved a grade 9!

√ Yr10. There are currently twenty-five Yr10 students attending Maths Master Class sessions after school on Thursdays. They are working towards the AQA Further Maths Level 2 qualification designed as an enrichment for Key Stage 4 students who are targeting, a high grade in GCSE Maths. The exam will stretch students with stimulating questions on GCSE Maths content plus some additional material that enriches their Key Stage 4 curriculum. The course encourages a love of maths, enabling students to show their confidence in the subject beyond the GCSE. Mr Wilson, who leads this extra-curricular activity said "I am impressed with their positive attitudes".

Mr Willerton, Acting Head of Maths said "I am really proud that we have been able to give these students the opportunity to take part in further study and foster their passion for Maths! Can I thank Mr McCallion and Mr Wilson for giving up their time to enrich the Maths Curriculum.

Teaching and Learning Update

Teaching is our core business. Quality teaching ensures that our children achieve beyond their potential. The GCSE outcomes are testament to the high-quality provision that we provide across all subjects. I can state that the teachers at St Damian's are the best that I have ever had the pleasure to work with.

- Focused professional development. At the heart of our school community lies a shared commitment to delivering exceptional teaching and learning. This year will be no different. This term, staff will continue to deepen their understanding on what truly makes excellent teaching by drawing on academic research, collaborative reflection and high-impact strategies that ensure that every student can thrive. Our unique 'Research Model' underpins this, allowing teachers dedicated research time to inform their practice. This academic year, we are drawing from leading educational research such as the work from Alex Quigley 'Why Learning Fails and what to do about it', Tom Sherrington's 'The Learning Rainforest', and Michael Feeley's 'The Teaching and Learning Playbook'. Our teachers continually refine their craft to ensure that teaching is both purposeful and impactful.
- ✓ Artificial Intelligence. Last week all staff took part in an engaging Twilight training session, led by



renowned education technology expert Mark Anderson, focusing on becoming artificial intelligence [AI] literate. The session explored how AI is transforming education and equipping staff with practical skills to use AI tools effectively. A key focus was on crafting accurate and purposeful prompts to get the best from AI, as well as discovering how these tools can support teaching and learning by saving time, enhancing creativity, and helping to design

stimulating, personalised resources for all students. The training sparked exciting idea across departments and marked a positive step forward in our journey to harness technology for meaningful classroom impact.











Parental Information Evenings

These evenings complement the more formal parents' evening and are a great means to communicate key messages and information to parents.

- Yr11. I delivered a presentation that focused on ensuring parents understand how to support their child to maximise their potential in their upcoming GCSE exams. Messages including revision techniques, my expectations in terms of behaviour, attitudes to learning and general standards, key dates, the Prom and managing stress. It was a very positive night, the only downside is that there could have been more parents in attendance to hear the messages and ask questions.
- Yr9. Miss Hogan and Mrs Gerschler were delighted with the success of our recent Yr9 Information Evening, which focused on ensuring parents understand how to support their child in their learning. The evening highlighted the importance of attendance, noting that students with poor attendance have a significantly lower chance of achieving good GCSE grades. The presentation emphasised using the school planner as a tool for organisation and communication with school. It also provided valuable tips on revision and maintaining a positive attitude to learning. Crucially, it provided information on guiding your teenager through this important stage of their development, covering healthy stages of development, "big feelings" like stress and mood swings, and the importance of balancing support with independence. We also highlighted risk-taking behaviours, the dangers of vaping, and online safety.
 - Wednesday 8th October at 6pm: Yr10 Parental Information Evening
 - Thursday 9th October at 6pm: Yr8 Parental Information Evening
 - Wednesday 5th November at 6pm: Yr7 Parental Information Evening

Update on Yr11

I have been delighted with the positive attitudes of Yr11 over the past few weeks. Many staff are saying to me that they really are focused in class. This bodes well for the future. I highlight some points for your information.

- ✓ Attendance. I can't stress the importance of attendance. Attendance fluctuates, on 19th Sept 14 students in Yr11 were off school. Since we have returned to school in September Yr11 attendance is 95.6% compared to 96.5% whole school. This is concerning, students attendance should be as close to 100% as possible. Work missed is rarely caught up and with GCSE's so close on the horizon every minute in school really does count.
- ✓ Revision at half term. At the October half term, there will be several revision sessions on. These are in History with Mr Gregory and Computer Science with Mr Tabas. Your child will have been informed if they are required to attend. Please support.
- ✓ Free ticket to the Prom. Each month staff will nominate a child who has done exceptional work or effort in their studies. One student will be chosen and given a free ticket to the Prom. This month's winner was Yeva Brytvak. She was nominated by several members of staff who were very impressed with her effort and work in Maths. This is great to read. A reminder that the Prom is not an entitlement but an invitation from me. Good attendance and good behaviour are pre-requisites to receive an invitation.
- ✓ Assessments. Yr11 formal assessments have started since Monday 30th September and will take place during normal lessons. Revision lists have been shared so they should now be preparing thoroughly. These assessments are an important checkpoint: they will highlight what students need to focus on ahead of their mocks before Christmas and, ultimately, their final GCSE exams in summer 2026. How you can support your child at home:
 - Ensure they have a clear revision plan
 - Encourage two hours of focused revision each evening











- Create a quiet, distraction-free space for study without the distraction of phones
- Ask them to explain a topic to you if they can teach it, they are more likely to know it
- Check they are using their revision list to guide their study
- Maintain a positive mindset

Macmillan Coffee Morning

Our Macmillan Coffee Morning was such a lovely event and a real success! A huge thank you to



everyone who baked or donated cakes, gave raffle prizes, came along on the day, and to our pupils who supported by buying cakes in school. An extra special thank you to our amazing Caritas team, who worked so hard to help the event run smoothly. Thanks to everyone's generosity, we have raised an incredible £1,080 We are so proud of the wonderful community spirit shown by everyone who got involved.

Staff also joined in with a BEE Well Breakfast, getting together to recognise and celebrate the Macmillan Coffee Morning. They brought in cakes to support the café and enjoyed taking time to connect with one another. A big thank you to all staff for supporting both the coffee morning and our BEE Well initiative.





We also celebrated National

Teaching Assistant's Day – and we think ours are the G.O.A.T. (Greatest of All Time)! Our wonderful Teaching Assistants go above and beyond every day to support our pupils, making a real difference to their learning and wellbeing. They are a vital part of our school community, and we are so grateful for everything they do.

The English Faculty Welcomes PGCE Trainees

The English Faculty was delighted to host another successful morning in partnership with English PGCE trainees from The University of Manchester. We welcomed 12 prospective English teachers into our classrooms, where they observed the high-quality teaching and learning taking place across the department. Later this month, we look forward to welcoming them back as they deliver the lessons they have carefully planned for our eager students. We wish them every success in their training year. We are proud to continue developing our strong and rewarding partnership with the University and be part of training future teachers.

Educating our Children on Alopecia



September is **Alopecia Awareness Month**, and during assemblies one of our teachers, Mrs D'Rozario, kindly shared her personal journey with alopecia. Her openness has helped raise awareness, challenge misconceptions, and show our students the importance of empathy, resilience, and celebrating differences. We are proud to stand together in support of Alopecia UK, who are marking their 20th birthday this year with the theme "**Strength in Numbers**". Mrs D'Rozario said "Alopecia has recently become a big part of my life, but it doesn't define who I am. Opening up about my journey hasn't been easy; it's deeply personal, but I felt

it was important. If by sharing my experience with pupils I can help them better understand what alopecia really is and the impact it can have on a person, then it's all been worth it".

Using the Car Park

A massive thank you to all the parents who are now not using the school car park. For clarity, let me explain why I have politely asked parents not to use the car park.











- ✓ The bus drivers are complaining that they can't access the car park
- ✓ Some parents are parking in double yellow lines and/or in the clearly marked bus lanes.
- ✓ The carpark gets too congested jeopardising student safety

Additionally, weather is not a reason to use the car park. In fact, during inclement weather, it's more crucial that you don't use the car park.

I have spoken to many parents the majority of whom understand, and accept, why this now has to be the case. For clarity, this is so that our great students, YOUR child, **doesn't get hurt**. If we continue with the above selfish actions, it will only be a matter of time before a child gets hurt. Unbelievably, several parents have been rude to staff when asked to park elsewhere and this is not acceptable. Respect is a key aspect of our mission statement and a courtesy we not only expect from pupils but parents as well.

All pupils will now be asked to leave through the green gate. This does not apply to students who have mobility difficulties. Thank you for your support in this matter. It is appreciated!

Yr7 News

Our new Yr7 students have made a truly wonderful start to life at St Damian's. From their very first day, they have shown kindness, respect and a willingness to support one another, embracing the caring spirit that lies at the heart of our Catholic community. It has been uplifting to see them grow in confidence, form new friendships, and settle so well into their new routines. We are incredibly proud of how well they have become part of the St Damian's Catholic community, and we look forward to supporting them as they continue their exciting journey with us. Long may this continue! Miss Joseph delivered a briefing to staff to share how well our Yr7 students have settled into school life. This was a wonderful opportunity to update colleagues on their progress so far, celebrate their achievements, and highlight the positive attitudes they are already showing. This ensures all staff are fully informed and can continue to support and nurture our pupils as they flourish throughout the year. Two important dates for your diary.

- 1. Welcome Mass. Friday 24th October 2.10pm
- 2. Parental Information Evening: Wednesday 5th November at 6pm in the Hall.

Attendance

As I repeatedly say, good attendance is paramount to your child's academic progress and social development. Whilst our attendance is well above national averages, I still have concerns over the irregular attendance of some students in each year group. Since September attendance has been 96.5%. There are 80 students who are below 90% and 10 of these students are below 50%. For avoidance of doubt, attendance helps students to develop socially, ensures that they maximise their academic potential and keeps them safe. Do not underestimate the importance of good attendance for the general well-being and life chances for your child.

We have also seen an increase in pupils arriving a few minutes late due to traffic. Parents, please ensure you leave enough travelling time so that your child arrives to school on time each day.

Pastoral Themes

This half term, form groups are exploring the theme of 'Hope'. Each week forms have been thinking about the power of 'Hope', and are looking at examples of people who, by having 'Hope', have a made a difference, however big or small. There are a variety of projects currently under way such as writing prayers and poems, producing artwork and even learning British Sign Language to sign the word, 'Hope'.











Young Carers

Ensuring exceptional pastoral care to all our students is at the core of St Damian's. As a school we are very proud of our Young Carers. These students help support with a caring role in the family home, as well as accessing their full-time education. At St Damian's we ensure an enjoyable place for our young carers, where they are equipped to reach their full potential. We fully understand that the essential first step to support a young carer is to develop our knowledge about their caring role in the family home. We offer support by allowing them flexibility with homework deadlines, allowing them to have time-out if needed and having a listening ear when they need to talk. If you, or a family member, need more information about Young Carers contact Mrs Harrison, Young Carers Lead for more details. All contact will be treated in the strictest confidence.

Trip to Paris 2026



Each year, at Easter we run a cultural capital trip. Next Easter we will be visiting Paris. Our itinerary is in the planning stage, but we will be having a full day at Disneyland Paris, and we are currently confirming which of Paris's famous landmarks we can fit into our busy schedule. We had over 200 applications for the trip from Y8 & Y9, partly due to the brilliant experiences in Barcelona and London in previous years. Student names were drawn fairly from a hat by me to decide who the lucky students are. In the coming weeks we will be gathering passport

information and medical information, and a parental meeting will be in January. The meeting allows parents to meet the staff, handy packing tips and expectations. All the staff involved will thoroughly enjoy helping and creating memories with your children that will last a lifetime. I will be accompanying the children again and I can't wait!

SEND Update

Students with special educational needs and disabilities continue to be a priority. At our staff INSET on 1st September, Mrs Walker, our SENDCo, imparted information about the needs of the new Yr7 intake and how to support individual students in lessons. The first SEND staff briefing of the year a week later had a single focus: supporting SEND students, and staff were reminded about training on adaptive teaching and 'reasonable' adjustments. Staff are committed to removing barriers to learning and encouraging students with SEND to become involved in leadership and extra-curricular activities.

Pre-Loved Uniform Sale

As is now tradition, Mrs Ormston, organised the sale of 'pre-loved' uniform that supports our families



whilst raising money for local charities. She said "Thank you to all parents who donated uniform this year and also those who came along to the sale. I'm so pleased it was a success once again. The initiative has raised a total of £2,281 for charities over the past 4 years, including Teenage Cancer Trust, Bowelbabe, Reuben's Retreat, The Christie, Emmaus Mossley, Willow Wood Hospice, Cancer Research and Charcot Marie-Tooth whom I expect

have also been very grateful". Long may this great initiative continue. And on behalf of the St Damian's community, "Thanks Mrs Ormston. Giving up your time to support these charities is a great gesture". Additionally, by giving uniforms a second life, you help reduce waste and promote a more environmentally conscious culture within our community; something we are incredibly proud of.













I am delighted to announce that there will now be **Prel** ved **Uniform 'Pop-up Shops'** [selling Blazers £5 and Jumpers £3]. The 'Pop-up Shop' will be throughout the year at school events such as parents' evenings, promoting Sustainability



and Stewardship at St Damian's. This initiative supports families with the cost of uniform, gives uniform a second life, championing the values of recycling and reducing waste, whilst raising money for charity - over £2,000 in 4 years! The picture on the left is of Mr Logue trying on

a pre-loved blazer!

Finally ... Save the Dates!



Last year we had a highly successful Expressive Arts extravaganza. Once again, the spotlight will shine on our students when the *Expressive Arts Extravaganza* returns on **Thursday 13th November**. This vibrant evening of music, drama, dance and visual art follows the outstanding success of last year's show, which brought together over one hundred students and captivated a full audience. Mr McArdle is already looking forward to

working with students to prepare an array of inspiring performances, ensuring this year's event will be an unforgettable celebration of creativity. Families and friends are warmly encouraged to save the date for one of the highlights of our school year! A night not to be missed! Save the date! More details to follow.

Yours sincerely

Mr Logue Headteacher









