



In all things faithful

**St Damian's RC Science College**

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**Headteacher**

Mr S Logue BA (Hons), M.Ed., NPQH

May 2023

Dear Parents and Carers,

A very warm welcome to my latest newsletter about all things St Damian's. I hope that you enjoy reading the May issue.

**Catholic Life of the School**

Mrs Gerschler and the RE team have been extremely busy this Easter season and the key message has been one of **hope**.



✓ At the start of the Month our Yr7 GIFT team crowned Mary during a special liturgy in the Chapel. Students read prayers, recited the Rosary and adorned our statue of Mary with flowers. On receiving the sad news about Mrs Jones, they used the time to reflect and write our own prayers for her.

✓ Yr7 have been preparing a special liturgy to celebrate Pentecost. Each Yr7 form will have time to reflect on the importance of this time of year for the Church but also our own personal experience of the Holy Spirit active in the world today.

✓ To celebrate the Ascension, a Holy Day of Obligation, each form had opportunity to reflect on the Ascension of Jesus and what it 'The Great Commission' is reflected in 'The St Damian's Way' especially 'Service'. Our local parish invited students to join them at 7pm Mass to celebrate this special feast day.

✓ Yr8 and Yr9 GIFT teams have been supporting the community through their loss by writing prayers in meetings, students have used collective mindful activities such as meditation and guided Gospel readings. Stewardship has also been part of the meetings, looking at our own environment and ways we can support the wider community to live out the messages of Laudato Si.

✓ Our Yr10 GIFT team, along with Calvin's friends, helped to plan and prepare a memorial service for him. Deeply affected by his untimely death, they shared who he was and celebrated his life with the Year group. Calvin's family were invited and spoke about him to Yr10 alongside his close friends who wrote personal reflections on what a fantastic friend he was. As part of our tribute, Yr10 wrote memories and prayers and hung these the bereavement tree. Our service started with prayers and we released balloons at the Bereavement Garden. These were a symbolic gesture of those gathered releasing prayers and memories into God's hands. Our Yr10 were reverent and respectful, with students gathering in silence and praying together. Calvin will not be forgotten, and we pray for God's love and protection for Calvin and the people who grieve for him.



✓ The Yr10 GIFT team also focused their meetings on 'The Words of Pope Francis' based upon the recently released 'Stories of a Generation – With Pope Francis'. This was a chance to reflect on the teaching of the Pope through social media and how relevant they are for today.

St. Damian's RC Science College

## Safeguarding Update

This half term, staff have had CPD on how to *identify and challenge sexual harassment* amongst young people. This is a growing concern because of the increased use of unacceptable sexualised language amongst children. Sexual harassment covers a wide range of issues from unkind words to unwanted physical touching. Due to the severity of this Mrs Brophy has reinforced the importance of our students reporting interactions with sexualised content in assemblies. We believe that it is only through education and an open culture of reporting that we can promote respect and moral judgement in our students. As a parent myself it is important to have the mind-set that this *'could happen to my child'*. In essence, no child is immune to being an unwanted victim of sexual harassment.

## Inappropriate use of Social Media



It has come to my attention that a number of our students are misusing social media. Most of this misuse is taking place outside school hours but I still have the authority to sanction students even if this is the case. Can I ask parents/carers that you regularly check what your child is being exposed to on-line. Whilst we continue to educate our students about what is appropriate/inappropriate content in whole school assemblies and PSHE lessons, parents must also bear some responsibility. In a recent Yr8 assembly, the Head of Year's motto regarding social media was *'if it's not kind, don't share it'*. This should be the motto share at home. Furthermore, please do not believe that *'this isn't about my child'* as it equally applies to all children.

## Operation Spectre – Knife Crime Presentation

St Damian's were delighted to welcome Prison Officer Paul McGovern MBE, from HMP Manchester, who works within the Prison Community Team which engages with children in local schools to break the cycle of children being peer pressured into local crime gangs.

Our School engagement officers Greg and Tony and neighbourhood PCSOs joined Paul to help deliver an Operation Sceptre 'Actions have Consequences' workshops to our Yr7 to Yr10. Operation Sceptre was a focus on knife crime session,



all done in a fun, but very informative way. The session is vital to preventing knife crime and focusing on young people to help aid their education around the consequences of carrying a knife. The team were also joined by Lauren from the Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue service who spoke to our pupils about the importance of keeping safe around water during the Summer.



## Department for Education [DfE] Update

- *Visit:* Last half term a film crew, working on behalf of the DfE, visited St Damian's [one of only five schools chosen from across England] to build a library of footage and create video content for their social media and event presentations, in order to improve the quality of DfE communications and better illustrate the work they do in purchasing/procurement of school equipment. The crew were extremely complementary of how polite, well behaved and well 'turned out' our students were. Furthermore, they were impressed with the school in general. It is always great to hear positive feedback from external visitors.
- *Improving our safety:* We have recently received 2 new defibrillators from the DfE. These will ensure that everyone in our school community [as well as outside our school] has the reassurance

- that such essential lifesaving equipment is on our school site. They will also build on the delivery of our curriculum, with students having the opportunity to be trained in life-saving first aid methods, and the essential need and purpose of defibrillators in CPR.

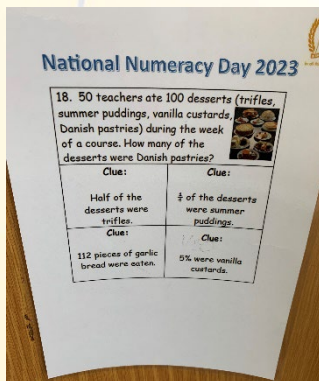
### St Andrews University

On the 5<sup>th</sup> of May, Yr7 students took part in an enriching webinar organised in collaboration with the University of St. Andrews. Dina Nayeri, who ran the session, is an Iranian-America novelist, essayist, and short story writer. She spoke to the children about her own experience as a refugee, about how displacement affects us all, and about the power of welcome. After the session, students were invited to consider if their impression of 'what a refugee looks like' had changed. All students were also given a free copy of Dina's book, *The Waiting Place*. The university will use the responses and ideas to further their own research in this area.

### Mathematics Update

- *United Kingdom Mathematics Trust [UKMT]*. St Damian's entered the UKMT [Intermediate Mathematical challenge] back in February and following great results we entered a further 35 Yr7 and 62 Yr8 students for the Junior Mathematical Challenge. Well, a fantastic 58% of our entrants achieved an award! The challenge involved a 1 hour assessment where students needed to answer 25 questions requiring high level analytical skills. The challenge is taken by high ability students from across the UK and British schools overseas. Nationally, only 8%, 16% and 25% of entrants achieve Gold, Silver and Bronze Awards, respectively. We are incredibly proud of all who have taken part and are delighted to announce that 56 students achieved awards, 1 Gold, 24 Silver and 31 Bronze Awards. As the extra-curricular offering grows in Mathematics, we look forward to more success next year. Well done to all the winners and all the students who took part! Can I also thank Mr Willerton for facilitating this excellent opportunity to stretch our more able children in Maths.

- *National Numeracy Day*: Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2023 was National Numeracy Day. Numeracy skills are essential to have, and St Damian's marked this day by ensuring students had opportunities to take part a range of activities across the school. In lessons students explored different tasks involving skills they will use regardless of their career, mainly focusing on the application to finance and budget management. Yr9 students took part in the Numeracy Challenge in computer rooms which helps to build their confidence with numbers and practise their skills. Finally, students took part in a 'treasure hunt' during lunch. Problems were carefully chosen in each subject to show students the importance of numeracy across the



curriculum.

### Yr11 Update

I have been extremely delighted with the really positive attitude of Yr11 students over the past few weeks with the start of their GCSE exams. They have showed determination and responsibility and the maturity shown has been one of the best I have known. We are now half-way through, but it is important that they show the same commitment after the half term break. I repeat that expectations over the next few weeks in terms of behaviour, attendance and punctuality are still the same. Our Leavers Mass is on **Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> June at 12pm** and our Prom is on **Friday 30<sup>th</sup> June**. Remember, the Prom is by invitation only. Sadly, several students have had their invitation withdrawn. I attach the half term revision timetable below



for your perusal. Students will be told if they have to attend. In addition to this, students will also be informed about any Saturday revision that they are expected to attend.

Date	Time	Teacher	Subject
Tuesday 30 <sup>th</sup> May 2023	9:30am – 12:00 12:00 – 2:30pm	SSN	Spanish Foundation Spanish Higher
Wednesday 31 <sup>st</sup> May 2023	9:30am – 12:30pm 9:30am – 2:30pm	AMH LGY	History History
Thursday 1 <sup>st</sup> June 2023	10:00am – 12 Noon 10:00am – 12 Noon	MJE MGR	Science (X2) RE (Y1 & X4)

### Yr10 GCSE Art Update

A fantastic opportunity has arisen for our Yr10 GCSE Art students to participate in a study club after school on Thursdays. The class will be split into two groups and each group will have 4 weeks dedicated to improving their Natural Forms projects. Mrs Freeman will help students to refine existing work by recapping the basics and experimenting with new techniques in printmaking, painting, drawing and mixed media. I ask that parents support this initiative as it counts towards their GCSE exam qualification.

### Prefects 2023-2024

On Wednesday I was extremely happy to recognise so many of our Yr10 students hard work, conduct and effort by awarding them with a Prefect tie. As these pupils move towards Yr11, they are excellent ambassadors for St. Damian's and role models for our younger students. As ever, many aspired to become Head Boy or Head Girl and with so many fantastic students this was a very difficult decision to make. After taking on board staff nominations, letters of Application, a presentation followed by questions, I am delighted to announce that **Finlay Hayworth and Brooke Hilton** became our Head Boy and Head Girl. Our deputy Head Boys were Namit Chandra, Garth Herman and Reuben Benny while our deputy Head Girls were Akshaya Babiyansebastin, Alice Sloan and Emily Bowker. Miss Joyce and I would like to say how extremely proud we were of all the students who were exceptional and clearly love being a student at St Damian's. Below are a few words from the Head Boy and Girl.

- ✓ *Head Boy, Finlay Hayworth.* Becoming Head Boy at St Damian's is a huge honour for me, and I am proud to say that I'm a student at this outstanding school. The community at St Damian's has become a family to me over these past 4 years, and it's a privilege for me to represent school to the current students and parents, and also prospective students and parents. My love for the school was a driving factor in my application for Head Boy, and I hope I can show the staff, students, and parents how much I care as I work with the senior leaders next year.
- ✓ *Head Girl, Brooke Hilton.* I am the new Head Girl for St Damian's RC Science College. As Head Girl, I wish to maintain our school's outstanding reputation as well as upholding our religious beliefs and helping to recognise our diversity. Furthermore, I would like to help other students to excel in their schoolwork and maintain the positive wellbeing for all staff and students. Finally, I would like to represent our school both inside and outside.

I have no doubt that Finlay, Brooke and all the other prefects will be great ambassadors for our community!



## Duke of Edinburgh Update



On Friday 19<sup>th</sup> May, almost 40 Yr 9's spent the day training for their upcoming assessed expedition in July. Students were practising a variety of skills including navigation, camp craft and first aid. The day started with a trail around our very local albeit very beautiful countryside; using a map and compass to navigate a very scenic route from school up to Hartshead Pike.

Students also had a chance to put up tents, practice several first aid scenarios, and sample some melted chocolate and marshmallows cooked on outdoor stoves, a definite highlight! All students participating took part with full enthusiasm, and Ms Price who was leading the day, said that the students were a credit to themselves and she is so looking forward to completing the overnight camp with such a fantastic group of pupils.



## Extra-Curricular Activities

At St Damian's we have an extensive extra-curricular provision and want our students to be confident, resilient and happy. With all of the pressures young people face today, it is more important than ever to participate in school life and activities that support their physical and mental well-being. We are proud to offer a range of Extra-Curricular activities from Musical theatre to Basketball. We encourage that parents support these and look on our website for what is on offer. An updated schedule will be posted on our website in preparation for the half term 6.

## Celebration Evening

As a community we will be celebrating the many achievements of students in Yrs7- 10 at **6pm on 28<sup>th</sup> June**. This is one of my favourite nights of the year where the students showcase our great school and are rewarded for their work, their effort and their attendance. This year we will also be celebrating **St. Damian's 60<sup>th</sup> birthday**. St. Damian has been at the heart of this community for many years and by celebrating today's students, we know they will become tomorrow's leaders.

## PE Updates

I am delighted to inform you that our PE department has been very busy over the past few weeks. Below is a list of their achievements.

- Yr11 football: Tameside Cup Winners, beating Mossley Hollins 4 – 1
- Yr10 football: Tameside Cup Winners, beating Mossley Hollins on penalties [3-3 in normal time]



- Yr7 football: Tameside Cup Runners Up. Defeated 4 – 2 by Audenshaw



- Yr9 Boys Development Football – Winners. Beating 6 teams in a 6 a-side tournament @ Copley
- Yr8 Girls Netball – Tameside Runner’s Up
- Yr11 football Catholic Cup Final vs Our Lady’s – Runners up. We lost on penalties.

On the final bullet point, I received the following email from Mr Vincent, the Deputy Headteacher of Our Lady’s. It said ...

**“Dear Sheldon, As you are probably aware, your year 11 boys played in the Catholic cup final this afternoon against Our Lady’s. I thought it was important to acknowledge and bring to your attention how courteous, respectful and well-mannered your boys were, absolute credit to the school. The school have clearly done a great job with them over the last 5 years. I wish them all the best on their exams. Best wishes”**

I hope that parents are as proud as I am. It is always great to receive external recognition about our school, and in particular, our great students! A big thanks to Mr Burtles and the PE team!



**Siblings show great leadership experience**

St Damian’s were again honoured to be asked to host the Tameside primary schools football cup finals. Over three days, six primary schools competed for their end of year trophies. Two of our students, Zara and Finlay Hayworth, who are also siblings were selected to officiate the finals. They showed fantastic leadership qualities and excellent decision-making skills in some high-pressured situations. Donal Townson, the secretary of Tameside SFA said, *“These two young people are great role models to the young footballers of Tameside”*. Zara is beginning her refereeing journey by undertaking the qualification during the summer and we are also proud to congratulate Fin, as he is one of the youngest qualified referees to be promoted by Manchester FA this season and will be

officiating at Manchester United and Manchester City’s academies. Well done Zara and Fin! Great role models for St Damian’s!

**St D’s was even represented at the King’s Coronation!!**



We were also very proud to hear that Naomi Park, who left St Damian’s in July, was a standard bearer with the Royal British Legion at the King’s Coronation. They provided a guard of honour of 100 Standard Bearers to line the procession route in Parliament Square.



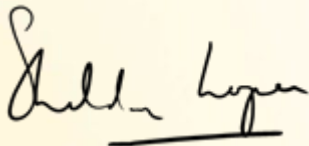
## General Updates

- **Strikes.** I apologise for the disruption to your child's education with regards to the strikes. These are National strikes and do not reflect either St Damian's or the great staff within. At the time of writing this dispute has not been resolved. At this time, I do not have any more information when, or if, future strikes are happening, but I will endeavour to keep parents informed.
- **Be Well Tameside Service.** A few weeks ago, we had the 'Be Well Tameside Service' in school offering adult NHS Health Checks to promote a range of health and wellbeing support and advice on a range of day-to-day lifestyle choices. Claire Devy, the Health Improvement Manager, emailed afterwards to say thanks and how she and her team were made very welcome. She stated, "Every staff member was so welcoming and many told me how happy they are working at St Damian's, which will have a huge impact on health and wellbeing". It is always great to hear external voices commenting upon how strong our community is. I would like to thank Mrs Ogden and Mrs Jinks, who lead on staff well-being across the school, ensuring that all staff are supported in their mental and physical health.
- **Pre-loved Uniform Sale:** Following on from last year's success, Mrs Ormston will be organising another pre-loved uniform sale [date still to be confirmed]. In the meantime, we invite you to drop off any donations to school, good quality second hand uniform that your child has outgrown, or if your child is in Year 11, will no longer need after their exams in June. All items accepted, including ties and PE kits, that were particularly popular last year. As before, donated items will be sold for a small fraction of the price when new, and all proceeds will be donated to St Damian's chosen charity for 2023. The success of this will be hugely reliant on donations from parents and we hope we can count on your support. Remember, when we recycle clothes, we also play a part in reducing landfill.

## Finally

I hope that you and your children have a great half term break and that the weather is kind to us. As always, thanks very much for your support.

Yours faithfully



Mr Logue  
Headteacher