



In all things faithful

**St Damian's RC Science College**

Lees Road  
Ashton-under-Lyne  
OL6 8BH

**Tel:** 0161 330 5974

**Fax:** 0161 331 4744

**Email:** [admin@stdamians.co.uk](mailto:admin@stdamians.co.uk)

**Web:** <http://www.stdamians.co.uk/>

**Follow us on Twitter:** @StDamiansRCSC

**Find us on Facebook**

**Headteacher**

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

March 2023

Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome to my latest monthly correspondence that showcases all the great stuff that goes on at St Damian's. This newsletter will look slightly different and I hope that you enjoy reading!

### Catholic Life of the School

Another packed programme of events this half term from Mrs Gerschler and her RE team! So many external guests visited the school community to share their expertise and enhance our catholic life provision.

- **Yr11 GCSE RE revision:** During the last half term holiday, Rabbi Chaim Cohen worked with Yr11 students, preparing them for the Judaism GCSE unit. We are proud to work alongside our Jewish partners to build strong interfaith relationships and hear first-hand from that faith tradition directly. Students learnt about the Messiah, traditional marriage rituals and worship in the Synagogue. Rabbi Cohen also brought in some items used in worship that the pupils could look at up close. Rabbi Cohen said *"Thanks for the warm welcome at your school today. Both classes were a real pleasure to speak to, and I was most impressed both by their knowledge as well as their level of engagement! They are a true credit to you and your department!"*. This was lovely to hear. Well done to the Yr11 students!



- **Caritas Ambassadors:** This group of students enjoyed fantastic training delivered from Caritas Salford. We would like to thank Kathryn Ansley, Formation co-ordinator for Caritas, for her inspirational advice that will take this group from strength to strength. Our aim is to put our faith into action and take the message of hope and love to all we meet.

- **Yr7 GIFT team:** This month it was great to see the Yr7 GIFT team receive their Purple ties and receive some training on Mass preparation from our link governor, Sister Roseline. This leadership group is very eager and have many ideas on developing Faith Formation at St Damian's. The GIFT team will also work closely on 'Hope in the future'. We are excited to see the team spread the message of Jesus in the hearts and minds of all.



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- *Reconciliation:* Yr7-10 attended a Reconciliation service led by Fr Philip Sumner. It was great to see 'The St Damian's Way' in practice, working together collaboratively to make a special moment for the students we serve. Fr Sumner received a warm welcome and there were many compliments about how he delivered the importance of forgiveness. All years respected the reverence of the service. A special thanks to Mr McArdle for the wonderful music and fantastic singing from the Choir and individual singers. I would also like to commend the Yr8 GIFT team for their eloquent reading.
- *St Joseph's Parishioners:* Our Hope in the future link this month was with our local parish community from St Joseph's, who joined us for 'fish and chip' Friday lunch. They were hosted by the Yr7 GIFT team who delivered a reflection on faith during the Lent season. Our guests were entertained by the Caritas Ambassadors with a game of Bingo and a quiz. It is great to see our students leading from the front and building their confidence.
- *Prayer:* This half term, the Yr8 GIFT Team have been focusing on *mindful prayer*, making mindful prayer 'handprints'. They also helped with the Reconciliation Service. They are currently working on an Easter Display for our Chapel to celebrate that He has risen! Alleluia! Our Yr9 GIFT team have focused on *creative prayer*, writing different prayers that are focused on stewardship and caring for our common home, the planet, as well as each other. They have taken time to deliver a prayer that they have written each morning to different forms across the school, keeping the pastoral theme at the forefront of our thoughts each day. The Yr9 GIFT team have also made colourful 'prayer chains', where they have written down the names of people that they would like our community to pray for, such as those impacted by the war in Ukraine or the Earthquake in Turkey.
- *Yr10 GIFT team:* These leaders have independently created activities for form groups during Lent. Using key quotations from the Lent and Easter seasons Namitwil Chandra has created a 'Word of God Treasure hunt' around school giving students a chance to win an Easter egg. As a focus for prayer during Lent Akshaya Babiyanebastian has created a 'Daily Lent Prayer Timetable' for forms to use. Ben Sharples has created a Chapel activity writing task, 'My Lent promise' which will be used to create a chapel display. Finally, Amy Holmes and Myriam Mambu have created and shared a "Holy week - what is it?" information PPT for students and staff. Well done to everyone!

### Safeguarding Update

During this half term staff were trained by Chris Henniker from CGL [Change, Grow, Live] about Child Criminal Exploitation [CCE]. Chris showed a presentation on the vulnerabilities of young people in our society and how they can innocently be drawn into gang culture. As a school we felt that our young people should have this information shared with them and in the final couple of weeks in school Mrs Brophy led assemblies focusing on 'chicken shop grooming'. This 5 minute video led to thought provoking conversations and opened up discussions on how easily the generosity of a stranger can have serious outcomes. I ask that you take the time to watch this 5 minute video which shows how seemingly innocent interactions can lead to your child becoming thousands of pounds in debt and manipulated and coerced by exploiters. Remember that you must not think that this 'wouldn't happen to my child. Sadly, all children are at risk! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UcuJ3-6Nfec>

### Yr11 Update

The vast majority of Yr11 students are working really hard in school. I ask that parents ensure that they are working hard at home too. This is what they have to do to fulfil their potential. I repeat that there is **no substitute for hard work** but the rewards, great GCSE outcomes, are worth it!

- *Mentoring:* After the MOCK exams in January, we introduced a mentoring programme for a number of Yr11 students to raise their achievement and confidence. It is great to see most students engaging with this mentoring and making progress. Please continue to support us by encouraging your child to attend all revision sessions offered and to attend their mentoring sessions.

- *Intervention.* This continues before and after school. It builds confidence, ensures students get into good habits/routines as well as exam practice. I ask that parents ensure that they support this initiative. Your child will know what intervention to attend.
- *Btec PE exam:* Results will be released in April and I hope these may allow students the opportunity to improve their current grade. It is vital students continue to work hard in their final Leadership unit. They must read and understand the assessment criteria in order to add sufficient detail into their work. It is essential students meet deadlines given.
- *English.* Mrs Turbatu was delighted with the attendance of students at the additional English Language mock on the staff INSET day in March. The positive attitude of the children was really impressive and demonstrated their commitment to achieving their potential. Keep up the hard work Yr11- your English teachers are delighted with your efforts!
- *Prom.* A reminder to say that this is by invitation only. It is a great night to celebrate 5 years at St Damian's. Sadly, 2 students have had their invitations withdrawn.
- *Days Left.* There are now **18** school days left before the first exam which is Religious Studies on the 15<sup>th</sup> May. The exam timetable is on the school website under the *General Information* tab.
- *Easter Revision:* I am delighted to say that there is a comprehensive revision schedule in place for the Easter break. Your child will be asked to attend these. I ask that you support the school by ensuring your child attends.

Date	Time	Teacher	Subject
Mon 3 <sup>rd</sup> April	10:00 – 2:00	RTU, HJL, SBH, JLB, SBY, CWR	English
Tues 4 <sup>th</sup> April	9:30 – 2:30	LRD, CSY LGY	Geography History
Wed 5 <sup>th</sup> April	9:30 – 2:30	AMH, LGY	History
Thurs 6 <sup>th</sup> April	9:30 – 12:30	PGL & Maths Dept	Maths
<b>** Easter Weekend **</b>			
Tues 11 <sup>th</sup> April	9:30 – 2:30	SSH, SSN SDO	Spanish Food Tech
Wed 12 <sup>th</sup> April	9:30 – 2:30	SSN ABM	Spanish Chemistry 11X1
Thurs 13 <sup>th</sup> April	9:30 – 2:30	NOE, ABM, NRN, APL, NSR, MJE	
Frid 14 <sup>th</sup> April	9:30 – 2:30 9:30 – 2:30	JLS MGR, EAD, JYS	French RE

#### ASPIRE Assemblies

An important aspect of the 'St Damian's Way' is to celebrate the achievements our great children at the end of each term through our ASPIRE assemblies. This week all year groups have had their ASPIRE assemblies and a large number of students have received certificates, vouchers and Easter Eggs to acknowledge their hard work and resilience. A special mention goes to Yr11, who had their last ASPIRE assembly at St. Damian's. Many of our Yr11 students are working extremely hard at the moment attending intervention classes before and after school and their ASPIRE assembly provided an important opportunity to recognise their efforts.

#### Careers Week

Week commencing the 6<sup>th</sup> March, saw all students in Yrs 7 -10 learn more about their future Careers options. Miss Joyce organised a wide variety of external speakers in school ranging from, 'Corpus Christi College, The University of Oxford' to a local employer 'Whitecroft Lighting Limited' discussing the apprenticeship opportunities that they provide.

Students also participated in a variety of Careers lessons from each subject, to learn about the opportunities specific subjects may lead to. One aim of our careers provision is to inspire students to think positively about their futures.

### Update on Calvin

The St Damian's community have been raising money for Calvin in Yr 10 who in March 2022 was diagnosed with T-cell lymphoblast leukaemia. This is a very rare form of cancer and to date there is no known cure. We've held lots of fund-raising events, such as staff versus the Yr10 football team, where,



of course, Yr10 beat staff with a penalty, Easter Egg raffle, cake sale - where we must have come close to a world record for the amount of cake consumed in 20

minutes ! sponge the teacher, film afternoon and an Easter Egg tombola - all in an effort to raise money to support Calvin and his family at this very difficult time.



Today we were also delighted to welcome Calvin and his parents into Yr10 Assembly so that Calvin could say hello to his friends and thank them for all their support and how that support is keeping "his spirits high and fighting". Thank you, for your generous contributions and we ask that you continue to keep Calvin and his family in your thoughts and prayers.

### Eco Club and Planting Trees

On Monday 6<sup>th</sup> March, the St Damian's Eco Club assisted in a project organised by the City of Trees, a local charity, which aims to plant a tree for every resident of Greater Manchester (3 million) to help tackle the climate emergency. Over the course of the day, our Eco Club, led by Mr Stoneley, helped to plant over 200 trees on the school field. Not only will this improve the drainage on the school fields, but it will help to reduce the amount of CO<sup>2</sup> in the atmosphere in the long-term. The students were not only excellent ambassadors for the school, but also for Laudato Si', by helping to care for our common home.

### Yr9 Options Update

Many thanks to the parents who turned out to support Options Evening. It was a pleasure seeing the students enthused about the Options Choices that they have. A special thank you to the Yr10 helpers who did a great job in showing off their subjects. Please remember that the deadline for the Options Choices is **31<sup>st</sup> March** and this can either be emailed into [options@stdamians.co.uk](mailto:options@stdamians.co.uk), handed into the office signed or completed through Options Online. Please remember to include two reserve choices in case the chosen subject does not run. The presentation, video and Option booklet is available on our website.

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- *English Independent Learning Projects:* Over the past few weeks, the whole of Year Nine has been busy completing an independent learning project based on the social and historical context of the play 'Romeo and Juliet'. This is an essential part of their study of this GCSE literature text. The standard of work across all teaching groups has been outstanding. It has been an almost impossible task for teachers to choose the best projects, as their work has been so creative and beautifully presented. The winners in each class have been rewarded this week with Easter eggs in their Aspire assemblies. The English Faculty have been genuinely impressed and proud of their students. Great work Year Nine!

### Yr10 Update

- *Yr10 Sheffield Trip:* On 23<sup>rd</sup> March, Yr10 students travelled to The University of Sheffield to engage in a Careers Exhibition. They engaged with a range of providers including Russell group universities, The Army, Aldi and numerous apprenticeship providers. Feedback from the students indicated that they are now more informed about the range of options open to them post-16. Miss Joyce stated that all students were exceptionally well behaved and a pleasure to take out for the day! This is great to hear and I hope that this will raise the aspirations of Yr10.
- *Prefects:* The application deadline for Prefects and Head Boy/ Head Girl has now passed. Over the next few weeks each candidate's application will be processed and the criteria applied. Students applying for Head Boy and Head girl will be shortlisted and a small number will be invited for interview. Every year, this is a challenging process as the calibre of students is exceptionally high. Therefore, selecting the successful candidates is difficult. We appreciate that some students may be disappointed, but we do value the contributions that all our students make towards school life.
- *Btec results for Child Development and Construction:* Well done to the Yr10 students who received their BTEC grades last Friday. The results, which count towards their final qualification, have shown that students who prepare well and work hard in class are rewarded with great outcomes! Congratulations and keep the momentum up!



- *Upcoming Yr10 exams.* These are due to start on 24<sup>th</sup> of April. These assessments will take place in the hall and will last for a fortnight. It is crucial that your child is working for at least 2 hours a night to ensure that they are prepared thoroughly. From experience, students who work hard in Yr10 have less pressure in Yr11. I ask that you ensure your child has a quiet place to study.

### Yr7 Parents' Evening

The last parents' evening took place at the beginning of the month. It was the first 'formal' engagement that many parents had with staff. There was a great turnout [nearly 90%] and there was a real sense of purpose to the evening. The feedback from parents was overwhelmingly positive. 110 parents *would* recommend the school, no-one said they *wouldn't* recommend the school and one parent said they *didn't know*. Thanks for this endorsement of what we are trying to achieve at St Damian's. The following are some of the comments from parents. All the comments are on the website.

***"We have been very happy with St Damian's and feel our daughter is reaching her full potential!"***

*"Fantastic school and learning environment – our daughter loves school and is performing to a great standard, thank you"*

*"Communication between school & home is very clear and consistent. Our daughter is very happy here and has settled well"*

*"Staff are very supportive, and our son is thriving at St Damian's"*

*"A fantastic school and I can honestly say that I am proud that my daughter attends this school, thank you"*

*"An excellent school with very good and friendly atmosphere. Our son has enjoyed every day and every week since he started"*

One comment said *"There's possibly an issue at lunch/break with limited access to the toilets? Full of children vaping. You may already be aware"*. I just want to reassure this parent and other parents that there are no issues with toilets at lunch time or incidents of large numbers of children vaping. However, where there have been a small number of vaping and/or bringing vapes to school appropriate sanctions have been given. For avoidance of doubt, vaping is not allowed at school.

### **World Book Day**

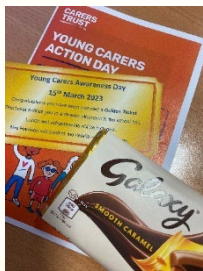
Celebrations were afoot for World Book Day on the 2<sup>nd</sup> March. Firstly, students took part in a form time task, testing their knowledge on famous authors and book titles. Students had the chance to win a 'guess the teacher reading' competition and a treasure hunt task, linked to famous quotes from texts that students may have read in a series of different subjects. The highlight of the day was a 'Book Swap' event, where students brought in their old books from home and swapped with other students for a different text. Some students left the Literacy Hub with armfuls of new books to read. The librarian, Ms Toole and Mrs Heenan were delighted that so many of our students want to read for pleasure – it has the biggest positive impact of any factor on children's life chances. At St Damian's we will continue to instil a love of reading and its importance.

### **Pi Day**

On the 14<sup>th</sup> March the Maths Department celebrated  $\pi$  Day, known as Pi. Pi is the symbol used in to represent a constant that is the ratio of the circumference of a circle to its diameter. This is approximately 3.14. In lessons, students used string to investigate the relationship between the diameter and the circumference of a circle. All KS3 students took part in a problem-solving competition with 5 questions increasing in difficulty. Maths staff wore Pi T-shirts to celebrate the day. A competition was held for students and staff to see who could remember the most digits. Congratulations to Shaun Shibu who increased his record to 225 digit and Miss Smith who was the staff winner, remembering 38 of them. Well done Shaun and Miss Smith!!

### **Food4Life GOLD Accreditation [NHS Tameside & Glossop Integrated Care]**

We are delighted to achieve this prestigious bi-annual accreditation for a 4<sup>th</sup> time consecutive time. It recognises we promote healthy eating and healthy lifestyles. We do so through the delivery of our PHSE curriculum and working alongside our fantastic catering team. Our Food4Life assessor, Gillian Shaw said *"We appreciate the time and effort you have put into liaising with the whole school to ensure compliance with the School Food Standards as well as creating a positive healthy lifestyle atmosphere. Huge congratulations on achieving the 'GOLD' level of the award!"*. Healthy eating and lifestyles are part of the 'holistic' education provision at St Damian's.



**Young Carers Action Day** On Wednesday the 15<sup>th</sup> March 2023 we helped to celebrate *Young Carers Action Day* with our Young carers here at St Damian's.

By giving pupils a golden ticket and on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2023, all our young Carers were invited for a lunch together and to watch a film in the afternoon.



### Duke of Edinburgh Award

On Thursday & Friday this week, 40 Yr10 students practiced their Duke of Edinburgh expedition and training. Students explored our local countryside around Dovestone including Chew reservoir, Alphin Pike and Swineshaw. Andy Ross, our approved activity provider and expedition leader, put students through their paces with real-life first aid scenarios, orienteering and map-reading and camp craft. Miss Price, Mr Healey and Ms Toole assisted the group and loved the challenges in doing so. Can I take this opportunity to thank these staff, in particular Miss Price who does a great job organising this scheme every year. The students learn so many important life skills.

### PSHE Curriculum Update

A few week ago, Miss Bury, trained staff on the importance of PSHE in the curriculum, with a particular focus on *'protected characteristics'* and *'fundamental British values'*. As a community whose core value is respect, at St Damian's we do not tolerate **any form** of discrimination. The briefing also highlighted some recent changes to marriage law, with the age of marriage now at 18 with consent removed for 16-17 year olds. At St Damian's educating students on pertinent issues is at the heart of our vision, which is to provide an 'outstanding' education.

### British Science Week



British Science Week was celebrated at St Damian's this month, with a week of activities dedicated to the theme *'connections'*. At lunchtime, and as part of Yr7 and Yr8 study clubs pupils applied their knowledge of electrical circuits to communicate via Morse code, led by our amazing Yr10 STEM leaders. Students from all year groups attended a talk by Alex May, a PhD student at the University of Manchester. His talk, entitled *'Particle Physics and the large Hadron Collider'*, focused on

machine learning, and its links to the experiments taking place with the Hadron Collider. He compared machine learning with neural networks in the brain, making the talk extremely interesting and relevant for GCSE Biology and Computer Science students. Students built Brookland's gliders and tested their flight. The week concluded with talks from Mr Allsopp on *'the Physics of football'* and Dr Robinson on *'soil as part of the Carbon Cycle'*.



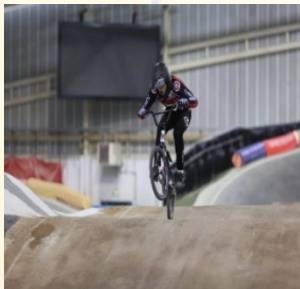
## Student trip to Emmaus Makes the News...



Last month our students visited Emmaus Homeless Charity Community in Mossley, allowing them the opportunity to get a real insight into the Emmaus community and the vital services and support they provide to homeless people. It also raised awareness of our social responsibility and the importance of community volunteering. Hazel Hodgkinson, Retail Manager at Emmaus, said: *"It was a pleasure to welcome the St Damian's young people to Emmaus Mossley. They were all very engaged, respectful and a real credit to themselves and their school. As well as breaking down some of the misconceptions of homelessness, we also gave the students an insight into our social enterprise and highlighted the many benefits of shopping second hand"*. Emmaus have published an article about our visit which can be viewed

<https://emmaus.org.uk/mossley/90-school-pupils-visit-emmaus-mossley/>. To further support and enhance our links with Emmaus, and as part of our social responsibility and community volunteering, support staff also visited Emmaus, to see first hand what the community does in supporting people in need. We were delighted to purchase old Church pews that are now used in our Piazza for our children to use at social times.

## Congratulations to our Great Students!



Declan Cunningham, a Yr11 student, recently received confirmation from British Cycling that he has been successful in securing a place in the male 16 category in the BMX World Championship in August, representing Great Britain. Despite fracturing his elbow last year, hard work and determination have ensured he is now back in top form. Declan's commitment to his BMX practice, his exams, revision and school work will hopefully ensure that he has great news in the month of August. Well done Declan!

Congratulations to Annie England, Yr11 and Martha Handrick, Yr8, who competed in the North West Schools Aerobic Championships at St Bede's in Blackburn representing St Damian's in the over 14's women's paired aerobic event. Both girls really enjoyed the experience and were delighted with their 7.8 score. Well done and I know that Mr Burtles and the PE team were very proud of them.



Congratulations to Mia-Jay Hurst in Yr7 who finished 3rd in her recent British weight lifting competition in London. Mia-Jay lifts through 'All things Strength' Gym in Stalybridge and has been training since she was 9 years old. This was Mia-Jay's 3<sup>rd</sup> Competition, so very well done on your placing Mia-Jay. In the competition she had to perform the 'clean and jerk' and 'snatch' lifts. She

is looking forward to further competitions through the year.



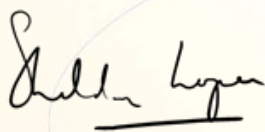


**Updated Uniform Policy** - On 13<sup>th</sup> February 2023, the Governing Board approved an updated Uniform Policy with minor changes which will be shared with you after the Easter break.

**Finally...** Many parents were delighted to find out this month that their child has secured a place at St Damian's. We look forward to welcoming them to St Damian's, starting with the transition day in the last half term. One parent, Kelly McCoy, emailed the school stating *"I've called the office to confirm but I just want to double confirm by email that we absolutely 100% accept the place. We are so happy and thankful for the place and Gracie is really excited to start in September!"*. I just thought I would share this joy with you all. Sadly, however, not all students who wanted a place were successful.

As always, thanks very much for your support. I hope that you have a happy and Holy Easter.

Yours sincerely



Mr Logue  
Headteacher

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