



In all things faithful

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Headteacher

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

July 2022

Dear Parent/Carer,

A very warm welcome to the last newsletter of the academic year. This year has seen the return to 'normality', although there is little doubt that the negative effects of Covid are still there, most obviously in the rise of the number of vulnerable children at St Damian's. However, the following shows that our community continues to be a place of **hope and inspiration** for both pupils and staff.

Liturgical Life of the School: Focus on the GIFT team

This has been another busy year for our liturgical life. Firstly, I am delighted to report that this year we have seen a massive growth in our GIFT team [Growing in Faith Together]. The pupils have responded to the needs of our community post-COVID and have joined the GIFT team as active members of the faith in school. The team is now 50 strong and are committed to promoting and embedding the prayer life of St Damian's. Our GIFT team this year have led many important occasions such as Ash Wednesday, our Travelling Nativity and Easter services, Remembrance Day, Leavers' Mass as well as prayer and a raffle for the people of Ukraine. The group are developing into outstanding leaders and work closely alongside our staff and Governors. In recognition of our active faith leaders, Rueben Benny was awarded the St Damian's Award for Contribution to the Liturgical Life of the School for his active involvement and leadership in the GIFT Team. In the autumn term, the GIFT team participated in rewriting our school mission statement as part of the INSET day with staff. Recently, they presented their work and achievements to Governors at the **United in Faith** meeting and are currently planning future events. The GIFT team are at the forefront of collective worship ensuring our prayer life is active and engaging. Our end of year liturgical service theme is "Expressing our Faith through the Arts". Year groups have been given the task to prepare and present the gifts and talents that we have developed throughout the year at St Damian's using art, drama, poetry or music. This showcases 'The St Damian's Way' in action.

Laudato Si and our Eco Club

On Friday 15th July, five members of our Eco Club along with Miss Holland and Mr Stoneley celebrated their successes at the Laudato Si' Champions Summit, held at Wardley Hall. The project was organised by St Mary's University in partnership with the Salford Diocese. The pupils have been working hard on projects which aim to help protect our environment and they demonstrated great communication and presentation skills as they presented to other schools within the Diocese. Pupils are excited to continue these projects in the next academic year. Well done!

Safeguarding updates

- ✓ *General over the summer.* I know that our children are looking forward to the summer holidays but once they start, some pupils begin to feel lonely and isolated as their school support network is temporarily unavailable. To help young people understand that a feeling of isolation can be quite normal, **Childline** have put together a summer survival kit. It is well worth a read as it covers topics such as coping with the break from school, staying safe and signposting for support. The website link can be found here. www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/home-families/seasonal-events/summer-holidays/

- ✓ **UNITE day.** To safeguard our community, we have created our own unique system in case an intruder is in school. Although we have strong security systems around the site, we believe in a 'it could happen here' approach to an intruder getting into school. Our system is called 'UNITE' and it puts the school into a lockdown situation. Last week we had a planned UNITE practice. Both teachers and pupils stayed calm and responded in a mature manner. Our UNITE system is not to frighten but to protect. As Headteacher I will never compromise on pupil and staff safety.
- ✓ **National Online Safety.** We have subscribed to the National Online Safety web site that will be useful to help parents and carers to understand how to safeguard their children. Over the summer we will share on social media weekly issues and strategies that can be easily implemented to support safeguarding. This week we have shared '*what parents and carers need to know about age-inappropriate content*'. Please read this highly accessible information and share it with your child. Remember the St Damian's mantra, 'it could happen to your child', so it is better to be proactive.

Teaching and Learning update. A focus on Early Career Teachers [ECTs]

This year at St Damian's we have had six ECTs who have been following the Early Career Framework and working towards achieving Qualified Teacher Status. All ECTs have successfully passed their first year. Working with their professional mentors, it has been a pleasure watching them develop over the year and seeing them develop as professionals and showing their commitment to teaching our great pupils. They are the future of St Damian's. Well done to them and their professional mentors!

Journalism Club

One of St Damian's strategic aims is to ensure that all our pupils become literate, and we always look at ways to engage pupils in all things literacy. Our newly formed Journalism Club, led by Miss Jameel, have recently published their first spectacular edition of our school newspaper, **The St Damian's Times**. This gives pupils a platform to work collaboratively with staff under the supervision of Miss Jameel. It aims to promote high levels of literacy, celebrate achievements, and raise the aspirations of our pupils. We will be launching some new features in the next newspaper, including games and competitions. The paper is accessible to all on the St Damian's website in the literacy section. We look forward to publishing a termly paper that will celebrate our wonderful and diverse community. Keep your eyes peeled for more! Any feedback greatly received!

University of Manchester Writing Competition

The English Department were very proud of all the pupils in Years 9 and 10 who participated in the writing competition, "**Words for Your World.**" Pupils had to write a speech or letter, addressed to the UN, on the climate emergency and were asked to consider '*How is climate change affecting you and what actions, initiatives, and policies should the UN prioritise*' and '*What are your hopes for the shape of our future world? What concrete changes need to be implemented to protect the climate and increase social equity*'?

Last Friday evening [15th July], I had the pleasure of joining Ms Jameel and Mrs Turbatu at the University of Manchester (*Human and Conflict Response Institute*) where we watched the winning entries and the pupils 'graduating'. As I sat there, I was so proud of their work which was both compelling and thought provoking. The judges, Dr Stephanie Sodero (HCRI) and Gareth Owen OBE (Save the Children), spoke with such passion about the calibre of the entries. They shared the hope they feel for the future having read such inspiring and pertinent words about the devastating impact of the current climate crisis. Congratulations to Martha McAlpin Dudley, who was a winner in the Year 9 category and, in Year 10, Ciara McCluskey whose work was highly commended, along with Lily Brown who was awarded the runner-up prize. You can read copies of the fantastic winning entries and view the film showcasing their work on The University of Manchester website:

<https://www.alc.manchester.ac.uk/connect/schools/outreach/as-competition/winners2022/>

Well done to the English department! It's great to see our pupils winning national accolades!

English Writers' Workshop Update

Furthermore, the English Department are delighted to recognise and celebrate the work of Sam Booth-Webb and Maddie Brooks, who have thoroughly engaged in 'Writers' Workshop' lessons and creative writing tasks throughout the year, producing thoughtful and original responses. Not only this, but they have also devoted personal time, away from the classroom and lessons to 'write for pleasure.' The calibre of their work has been mature and impressive; the English Faculty wanted to ensure that these students received public recognition as true ambassadors for the art of creative writing. Indeed, across all Key Stages the English Faculty regularly remarks upon the quality of students' independent responses to imaginative writing tasks. Well done!

Personal Development Updates

This has been a busy half term for our extra-curricular activities. The following is an overview of our planned personal development activities over the past few weeks:

- ✓ *'No More Knives' Tour.* Knife crime has a devastating impact on young people today and part of our Mission is to ensure we educate pupils on safety. The 'No More Knives' tour has been touring high schools with the aim of informing young children about making the right choice around the subject of knife crime. On Monday 20th June, Yr7-10 pupils enjoyed a performance combining music with powerful, real-life stories to equip them with the knowledge they need to say 'no' to knives. Educating pupils about the dangers and consequences of knife crime is increasingly important. Pupils left with a real sense and understanding of how to make better choices.
- ✓ *Yr8 BeeWell Politics Project.* Eight Yr8 pupils have taken part in a 4-week Politics Project run by BeeWell culminating in a pupil presentation to local politicians online on 4th July regarding key issues concerning young people in Tameside. Our pupils chose to speak about the increased cost of living and its impact on mental health. A proposed solution was to invest in local leisure centres with facilities targeted at young people. Ideas included outdoor football areas, an indoor gaming room, indoor play centre and a gym for children. Our pupils were complimented highly for their excellent presentation skills and for speaking with great eloquence. The politicians were impressed by the mature way in which they approached complex issues and said their ideas were well thought through. The Yr8 pupils were excellent ambassadors for St Damian's and for young people in Tameside.
- ✓ *Duke of Edinburgh Award [DoE].* Throughout this year, over 60 Yr9/Yr10 pupils have been working towards their Duke of Edinburgh award, mastering new skills, such as playing the guitar, photography and learning a language. In addition, they have been volunteering at different groups and organisations in our local community. Recently, they have completed the final part of their award, the expedition: Yr9 pupils [*Bronze Award*] set off on a 2-day expedition from Godley to Linnet Clough and on to Hayfield and Yr10 pupils [*Silver Award*] completed a 3-day expedition from Buxton, around the Dark Peak ending up at Tegg's Nose Country Park. The external assessor in an email to the school said "*It's a pleasure to spend time with well-behaved determined youngsters from St Damian's. They're a credit to the school*". A big thanks to Miss Price who leads on the DoE who also commented that the pupils were 'a credit to St Damian's'.
- ✓ *Young Carers Update.* Recently our Young Carers have been on a reward trip to Hollywood Bowl and they were also treated to lunch. They have been invited for a lunch on Thursday 14th July in school before we break for Summer. They will all be rewarded with Ice-creams at our 'Share Day' celebrations on Tuesday 19th July 2022 from the Ice cream van. Earlier this month, 3 of our YCs were lucky to be invited to the 'Young Carers Festival' for the weekend by Tameside Young Carers, they reported that they had an amazing time.

- ✓ **Yr10 Work Experience.** Congratulations to our Yr10 pupils who have just completed their work experience in a wide range of job sectors including education, retail, leisure, hospitality, social care and law with some travelling as far as Hertfordshire, Nottingham and Scotland to complete their placements. Feedback from employers was highly complimentary emphasising the maturity, initiative and sense of responsibility shown and pupils developed a range of employability skills. I am proud to hear such wonderful comments and this experience will prove to be of great value in the future when applying to college or securing an apprenticeship.

A local business said about one of our pupils:

'a nice young man, well-mannered and happy to do any task we asked him to do. He has a genuine interest in motor vehicles, very hands on, and understands the basic fundamentals of a tidy workshop and work area. That is extremely rare.....

XXX took it upon himself to ask us to sponsor him through an apprenticeship, which was nice, and something I would like to look into further.'

A local primary school said:

"We have had the pleasure of accommodating four of your students this week on their work experience placements. Can I take this opportunity to thank them for their contribution and compliment them on how well they have conducted themselves throughout the week".

- ✓ **Tough Cookies and Puberty.** Yr7 participated in a Puberty assembly delivered By Tough Cookies focusing on supporting pupils in developing their knowledge of their own bodies and health. The aim was to ensure pupils have the knowledge required to live safe and healthier lives as they become teenagers. It also provided the opportunity for our pupils to ask pertinent questions about becoming a teenager and growing up. Pupil feedback was positive with one saying. *"It made me feel better about the changes that are happening to our bodies and what we are experiencing is completely normal."*
- ✓ **ASPIRE Day: Promoting cultural capital at St Damian's.** On Monday 4th July we had our third ASPIRE Day of the year. ASPIRE Days enrich our curriculum, promote personal development and educate pupils on safety. The majority of the day is delivered by external speakers who have the expertise to provide a deep learning experience in areas such as health and well-being, relationships, safety, careers and finance. The day was delivered in a variety of ways including workshops, talks and practical sessions as well as theatre performances and employer encounters.
- ✓ **Tameside Schools Athletics Championships 2022.** A massive congratulations to all our talented athletes who competed at Tameside Schools Athletics 2022 Championships on July 13th. The individual achievements included gold medal winning performances in the 1500m, 800m, 200m, 100m, long jump and 4x100m relay. Silver and bronze medals were also won in 300m, javelin and high jump. The girls' Yr7/8 junior team were crowned overall winners following an exceptional individual medal tally across all track and field events. Our extremely proud PE department described the pupil's behaviour as exemplary, their competitive team spirit as infectious and their athletic performances as outstanding! Well done to all who participated and thanks to the PE Department for a very successful day!
- ✓ **Sports Day 2022.** Wow! What a day. Pupils and staff enjoyed a full day of interform sport including Old School Relays, Indoor Relay Running and five-a-side football, before finishing off the day with a form group sports quiz. Our fantastic PE department were supported this year by a fantastic group of Yr10 work experience pupils whose assistance throughout the day was

priceless. Thanks must go to all the staff who supported the organisation of the day and who cheered on our great pupils! Roll on Sports Day 2023!

- ✓ *Share Day*. One of the core values of our Mission, is Service. One way we demonstrate service is through 'Share Day'. In the weeks leading up to Share Day, pupils take part in charity events to raise money. All monies raised will go towards our two charities, chosen by pupils and staff, the **Teenage Cancer Trust and the Bowel Babe Fund**. The theme this year was 'Holiday Getaway' with pupils embarking on 'The St Damian's Waves' Cruise Ship to sail from port to port. The hot weather made it feel like a holiday in a far-away destination! Pupils made stops in England to whiz down the Helter Skelter or battle the Bungee Run, there was a stop in Ireland to enjoy the traditional music and sit down for a drink in the "pub" or play a round of Footdarts. Pupils visited Sweden to dance like Abba in the Disco Dome or play the Ikea Pillow Bash. In Hawaii, pupils relaxed after our hike to Hartshead Pike at the TiKi hut and chilled out with an ice cream. Pupils visited the USA to take a break from the heat in the Sports hall to play on the air hockey or table football in the arcade. A quick stop in France for a bounce on the bouncy castle and then to Spain for football and bull riding. Finally, in Australia pupils got to test their balance on the Surf board! A jam-packed day but all for a great reason, to reward our fantastic pupils and dedicated staff and to raise money for Teenage Cancer Trust and Bowel Babe Fund. We would like to thank parents and the wider community for helping make these days such a success and so special for our pupils. It was truly a fantastic day to end another fantastic year!

Accolades Update

As a school community, we always strive to receive external recognition for the work that we do for our pupils. I highlight recent accolades below:

- ✓ *Inclusion Quality Mark [IQM]*. Yet again St Damian's fantastic inclusion work has been acknowledged. Early July, Mr Dirk Pittard, from the Inclusion Quality Mark carried out a rigorous two-day assessment including speaking to pupils, staff, parents and carers, governors and external agencies, to get an insight into how we are a truly inclusive school. After intense scrutiny, Mr Pittard stated that St Damian's was a very special place, and that 'The St Damian's Way' was unique and provides a truly inclusive experience for everyone. I was really proud of my great staff when he said to me "**that you have an amazing school**". It brought a tear to my eye. In essence, inclusion is part of our DNA as a school community. I will share the full report when I receive it.
- ✓ *Investors in People [IIP] annual review*. As you know, we achieved the prestigious IIP 'Gold' in June 2021 and as part of our accreditation, Carol Davidson, the IIP Assessor, returned to St Damian's for our annual review. Carol met with staff to gain insight into any changes and to agree key priorities for next year. I am delighted that Carol was impressed with the progress made and said that it is evident that we care about our people, and that we are ambitious to do even more for them.
- ✓ *Excellence in Pupil Development Award [EPDA]*. In June 2021, we committed to achieving the EPDA. Following a robust final assessment process, I am delighted to announce that St. Damian's has met all of the key performance indicators and thus, it has been recommended that we receive this special accolade. The external assessor, Mr. Noble said, "**St. Damian's is a fantastic school**" and pupils, parents and staff affirmed that they were loved and had a strong sense of belonging to the school. I will share the full report when I receive it.

Updates on Recent School Events

- ✓ *Celebration Evening*. Personally, this is my favourite night of the year where we celebrate the St Damian's community and our great pupils within. The evening's theme was 'New

Mission...New Future' and the focus was on the elements of the '*St Damian's Way*'. It was a fantastic night of celebration where many children received rewards for their effort, work and achievements this year. Mrs E Jones MBE received a standing ovation in recognition for over 40 years' dedicated Service to Education at St Damian's.

- ✓ *Induction for new Yr6.* We warmly welcomed Yr6 pupils to our community on Friday 1st July. They joined their new form groups, had a school tour, enjoyed taster lessons in English, Science and Spanish and participated in collective worship. Bidding prayers, created by Yr6 pupils themselves, were read aloud to their peers during the liturgy. Pupils had a great day, and I will share a few comments; "*I was worried at first but now I have met new friends and enjoyed the science lesson*", "*I was worried about getting lost and now I've learnt more of the school I'm not anymore. I have loved today*" and "*Best school day ever! Teachers are so nice here. I just know I am going to fit in so well*". These comments bode well for the future of the class of 2027!
- ✓ *Year 11 Leavers' Assembly.* Always a great, yet sad, occasion where Yr11 celebrated 5 years' education at St Damian's. The turn-out from parents was huge, so much so that it was standing room only. It was fitting that the pupils ended their time at St Damian's by celebrating Mass with Fr Jude. We wish them all the best for their futures! Good luck!
- ✓ *Staff Induction Day.* On Friday 8th July we welcomed our new staff to the school for an Induction Day. The new staff loved meeting our pupils and they are really looking forward to starting in September. Like our ECTs they are the future of St Damian's. I have no doubt they will soon come to love our community!
- ✓ *ASPIRE assemblies.* There is no better way to end the year, than by celebrating the success of our fantastic pupils. All year groups celebrated their achievements, collective and individual, in their final ASPIRE assembly. Pupils were given awards for effort and academic achievements. We also celebrated the positive contributions individuals have made to form time and recognising the positive pupil leaders in our community. Whilst not all pupils received an individual award, I would like to congratulate all of our pupils on their continued hard work, resilience and positivity. Remember our unofficial motto: Believe to Achieve!

Ashton Sixth Form - Yr10 Realising Aspirations Awards Evening May 2022

Congratulations to the large group of Yr10 pupils who successfully completed the Raising Aspirations programme at Ashton Sixth Form having attended taster sessions in their chosen subjects and having completed a formally assessed piece of work. Pupils were complimented for their maturity, enthusiasm and high levels of engagement and I am extremely proud of their hard work and dedication. Well done to two of our pupils who were selected for special awards: *Anya Fotheringham* who received the award for Business, Economics & Finance and to *Thomas Brown* who achieved the award for Maths & Science. A fantastic achievement! Thank you to Mrs Henshaw who ensured our pupils were a success.

Year 7 Football Update

In June, our Year 7 football team were **winners** of the *Manchester United Emerging Talent 7 a-side Competition*. 120 schools entered the competition this year, with St Damian's winning the Tameside Tournament at The Cliff in January. They then went on to represent Tameside against 8 other schools at Manchester United's Training Ground last week. A fantastic team display saw the team come through victorious by a whole 5 points, scoring 10 goals and only conceding 1. A massive well done! It is becoming quite a season for the Year 7 football team as they were also winners of the Tameside Cup and are in the final of the Greater Manchester Catholic Cup, which, sadly, has been postponed for reasons beyond our control.

Year 10 Pupils' Mock Results

On Friday 8th July, our Yr10 pupils received their mock examination results. For many, there was joy and elation to see their successes after a very busy period of revision and hard work. For others, it was a time for honest reflection to acknowledge that they could do better and simply need to work harder. These pupils now need to be pro-active, determined and resilient and use some time over the summer to review the areas where they had gaps. Teachers believe that our pupils in Yr10 have huge potential to achieve some outstanding results next summer. All pupils must continue to follow our mantra '*Believe to Achieve*'!

Standards at St Damian's

As you are aware, at St Damian's we don't compromise on our high standards, including our uniform. I frequent many schools and I can honestly say that our pupils wear our uniform with great pride. In essence, when wearing the uniform our pupils are ambassadors for the school. So, it was very pleasing to receive the following email just before half term that I would like to share with you.

"Good morning,

I travel down Lees Road on my daily commute to work. As I drive down, I see St Damian's students every morning walking down to school. I have noticed over recent weeks that all St Damian's pupils are strikingly much smarter in their uniform than many pupils I see wearing other school uniforms. I am yet to see a St Damian's student with an untucked shirt!

This is clearly a reflection on the high standards imposed by staff at St Damian's.

Kind regards"

High standards of uniform reflects our values, including respect. Can I take this opportunity to thank parents in upholding our high expectations.

Rules of St Damian's

For the past ten years the rules of St Damian's have largely stayed the same. They are *fair, reasonable, transparent and enforced*. They are to ensure that when your child comes to St Damian's they feel safe and where effective learning can take place. I share these five simple rules below for your perusal.

1. **Uniform.** Our pupils are proud to attend St Damian's and wearing the correct uniform reflects this. Correct uniform also includes no jewellery, no earrings, no make-up, no fake tan, no false nails or nail varnish. Girls' skirts should be a decent length. Extreme hair styles are also not permitted. Hair should be natural looking, one colour and not too short. However, this is not an exhaustive list.
2. **Mobile Phones.** These are not allowed in school at any time of the day. Pupils must not use their phones until they exit the green gate. If caught using these, which is rare, they will be confiscated and parents will collect from reception.
3. **Chewing Gum.** NOT allowed in school as we want a clean and tidy environment. It is also important to note that the school does not promote 'energy' drinks and these should not be in school either.
4. **Eating 'Zones'.** Again, to keep the environment tidy for your children there are areas in school where no eating is permitted: these are clearly sign-posted. Food will be confiscated where this happens
5. The above 4 rules are underpinned by our **core value of respect**; respect for each other, for staff and for the environment.

Any pupil who consistently undermines these rules put their place at St Damian's at risk. Again, can I thank parents for their support in upholding these rules.

Preloved Uniform Sale

This is a new and brilliant recycling initiative organised by one of our parents, Mrs Ormston. As well as helping families with the cost of uniform and saving good condition clothes going into landfill, all proceeds from the sale are coming directly to St Damian's to raise funds for our chosen charities. Please drop-off your washed uniform donations on **Wednesday 20th July 5:30pm-7:30pm** at St Christopher's RC Church Hall, 5 St Christopher's Road, AUL, OL6 9DP. The sale will be at the Church Hall on **Monday 1st August 2022 5:30pm – 7:30pm**. I am grateful to Mrs Ormston for this initiative, and I ask parents to please support others in our community during these difficult times.

Staff Leavers July 2022

It is with sadness that we say goodbye this year to several members of staff, all of whom have served the pupils of St Damian's with commitment and dedication. The staff leavers are Mr Doughty, Mr Hallsworth, Miss Hogan, Miss Holland and Mrs Henshaw. I am sure everyone at St Damian's will echo my sincere thanks to them and wish them all the very best in their future endeavours. I particularly want to personally thank Mrs Henshaw, who has been an extremely hard-working and loyal Deputy Headteacher. I am delighted to report that Mrs Henshaw has secured a Headship and I wish her all the best in this new role.

New Staff September 2022

I am really excited about the new staff that are starting in September 2022. They are Mr Healey [PE], Mr McArdle [Music], Mr McCallion [Maths], Mr Nyarko [Computing] and Miss Yates [RE]. All of these staff have been appointed as they are focused on ensuring that your child receives a great education. I know that you will give them a warm St Damian's welcome and they will quickly 'fit-into' the St Damian's Way.

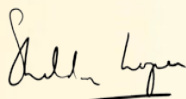
What a Year

As you read above, this has been another great year for the St Damian's community. Our vision, to be outstanding in all we do, is being realised by our mission of 'developing the whole child'. As Headteacher I am both humbled and privileged to lead such a positive community. Tomorrow, we end another highly successful academic year by formally celebrating the remarkable Mrs E Jones MBE and her 'Services to Education'. Mrs Jones, MBE, will celebrate with staff and special guests including her family, Canon McBride, Rev Fr Lemeh, Rev Fr Firth, and The Mayor and Mayoress of Tameside. In recognition of this service our new modular building will be named in her honour. **'The Elizabeth Jones MBE Literacy Hub'** is a fitting tribute to a steadfast and devoted stalwart of St Damian's. This Hub will be a focal point and showcase the importance of literacy in our community.

Finally...

I hope that you and your family have a safe and happy summer. I look forward to welcoming your child back Monday 5th September 2022.

Regards



Mr S Logue
Headteacher