



In all things faithful

26th May 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

The following letter gives important updates for parents.

Year 11, the Class of 2021!

It gives me great delight to start this letter praising the attitude and resilience of Year 11. Sadly, they have had an extremely challenging time over the past year through no fault of their own. Yet their attitude and maturity towards their assessments and their general conduct in school has been a joy to behold. As Headteacher, I couldn't be prouder of them. They truly are ambassadors for St Damian's. I am hoping that the traditional end of Year Prom goes ahead on Friday 25th June to celebrate five years at St Damian's. It is the very least your children deserve.

I wish them all the best for their future and I hope that St Damian's has had some positive impact on them as they grow into young adults.

Relaunch of the GIFT Team [Growing In Faith Together]

With our pupils back together in school, it was time for our GIFT Team to get back together for our first meeting post Covid. With Year 9 taking the lead, ideas and decisions were made about how we are going to further develop and embed the prayer life of the school in creative and engaging ways. Pizza, cakes and drinks helped to fuel the pupils' imaginative minds as they looked at prayer from the point of view of the pupils, and what they would like. The GIFT Team are eager to put into action all of the exciting ideas they have developed. Our GIFT team, who are recognisable by wearing purple ties that reflects being at the service of others, are stewards of St Damian's and they will be rewarded by 'jumping the queue' each Friday at dinner time.

Team St Damian's Fundraising: Manchester 10k run of Sunday 26th September 2021

Recently, several of our colleagues, who we know and love, have been affected by cancer. As a small, tight-knit community, this has had a huge impact on all of us. I, alongside other work colleagues, are entering the Manchester 10K on Sunday 26th September 2021. The St Damian's community has a long tradition of raising money for charity and as Headteacher, I am proud of the monies we have raised over many years. However, this time our aim is simple and that is to raise as much money as possible for Macmillan Cancer Support and break all previous records! Macmillan Cancer Support is a well-known charity and is renowned for providing care and support to those with cancer and their loved ones.

Therefore, I ask all parents to support us and donate either a 'one off' payment or set up a monthly amount by visiting our JustGiving page www.justgiving/stdamians.co.uk or via SIMS pay. All donations, regardless of the amount, will be greatly received and appreciated. More details can be found on the homepage of the school website. As always, a massive thanks in advance for your generosity and continued support, especially in these uncertain times.

Excellence in Pupil Development Award

We are very proud of our exceptional pastoral care and the opportunities that our pupils receive outside of their day-to-day curriculum. Developing the whole child is at the core of our Mission and pupils need to develop a range of skills that will give them the confidence they need to succeed. Over the next 12-18 months we have committed to obtaining the 'Excellence in Pupil Development' award, ensuring that we provide extensive opportunities to build the character of our pupils. Further updates will follow but please encourage your child to participate in as many activities as possible. In essence,

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Headteacher

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we want all pupils to engage and enjoy these extra-curricular activities as well as learning the academic curriculum we provide.

Year 10 update

- **Year 10 exams:** These will take place the first two weeks after half term, **7th -18th June**. It is pleasing to know that a number Year 10 pupils have a revision plan in place and are working hard doing the recommended 2-3 hours per evening. Pupils need to revise all that has been taught since September, including the work covered during lockdown. From experience, there is no substitute for hard work! In fact, the more work you learn this year, the easier it will be for when you start Year 11. I ask that parents of Year 10 pupils ensure pupils are working hard at home.
- **Year 10 Work Experience:** A reminder that work experience week is **12th-16th July 2021**. So far 82 pupils have been successful in finding a placement in a range of sectors such as Education, Health, Hospitality, Public Services, Retail and Leisure. Pupils who are unable to find a placement will take part in the Virtual Work Experience week in school. In order to ensure that pupils have the opportunity to meet as wide a range of employers / employees from different job sectors as possible, if any parent or work colleague would be willing to give a short presentation or run a workshop on your own job or career during the Virtual Work Experience week, please email: careerprospects@stdamians.co.uk by Monday 7th June 2021 and let us know about your availability, we would love to hear from you.
- **Prefects:** We recently appointed our Head Boy and Head Girl and their Deputies. This was a rigorous process and as expected, there was a strong field and the applications were exceptional. A big congratulations to Frank Duffy and Rhiannon Stafford who have been selected as Head Boy and Head Girl for 2021 – 2022. We know that they, and all the other prefects will be great ambassadors for the St Damian's community. The next opportunity to become a prefect will be July 2021. We hope that all year 10 students demonstrate they are capable of being ambassadors of our community over the next few months. Working hard for their upcoming examinations and developing positive relationships with their teachers will support their applications.

Year 9 update

- **99% club:** A massive well done to the Year 9 pupils who attended the 99% programme. Mr Burtles is extremely proud of the way you conducted yourselves and how you are all developing a positive mindset. You now have knowledge on how the brain works, how to use failure, how you can be successful like your heroes and you now have lots of revision strategies to help you through Key Stage 4. It was also great to see how confident you were in front of your parents, delivering to them all that you had learnt through the 99% programme.
- **Options:** Congratulations to Year 9 who have successfully completed the Options process. It is essential that during the remainder of the summer term, pupils work hard in all subjects so that they maximise the knowledge, skills and understanding that they will take with them from following a broad and balanced curriculum at Key Stage 3.
- **Greater Manchester Wellbeing Programme:** Fifteen Year 9 pupils took part in an external workshop on Tuesday 18th May to co-design a survey for young people to be used in schools across Greater Manchester. St. Damian's has agreed to be a pathfinder school for the Greater Manchester Wellbeing Programme to allow pupils to have a voice and to engage in the collaboration between the University of Manchester, Anna Freud Centre and GMC. The fifteen selected pupils were great ambassadors for the school.

Year 8 update

Mr Fay has reported that it has been fantastic to see the year group continue to mature and immerse themselves in the St Damian's way. Pupils should be proud of how they have participated in the many

opportunities available to build their character, including the liturgical life of the school, form captain presentations or Eco litter picking initiatives. Furthermore, as Headteacher, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the year group for the number of achievement points awarded, with a special mention to form 8JLS who are the form group with the most achievement points in the entire school. I will thank these pupils with a celebratory breakfast on Friday 28th May. Sadly, however, there are several pupils in this Year group who, despite warnings, are continuing to not follow our simple rules and often disrupt the learning of others. For the avoidance of doubt, this is not acceptable, will not be tolerated and their place at St Damian's is at serious risk.

Year 7 update on 'Caring for our Environment'

It has been a very busy few months for Year 7, planning and preparing presentations on 'Caring for our Environment' presentations. From this, 7BWN have gathered a variety of recycled materials to create 'bug hotels' which will be placed around school. 7NML have carried out a research survey on the recycling habits of the year group which they will present to the Year. I am pleased that there has been an overwhelming number of volunteers to help clear up litter in the Year 7 areas at break and lunch. We currently have a rota of four pupils picking litter each day. One of our core values, respect, is about respecting our school environment.

Share Day Thursday 15th July

As an optimist, I am very hopeful that one of my favourite days and one of St Damian's greatest traditions, Share Day, will be able to take place this year. However, due to the uncertainty of being able to arrange any external reward trips, I have decided to combine the Trips Day and the Share Day and make A 'Share and Reward' Day. This will be a big event and the theme will be The Wild West. As well as the traditional trail up to Hartshead Pike, the Carnival Rodeo is coming to town – where pupils will be able to have fun on the sheriff inflatables, tame the rodeo bull, try their luck on the fairground games, create wanted posters at the photo booth, complete their fancy dress costumes at the face painting booth, get creative at the Cactus arts and crafts station, pan for gold on the tombola, show off their line dancing skills at the hoedown or caterwauling on the karaoke and much more. Refreshments will also be available to buy at the St Damian's Saloon such as hotdogs, popcorn, candy floss, ice-cream, chocolate fountain and drinks.

I ask that parents make a voluntary donation of £10.00 per pupil via Sims pay and this can be paid in instalments. A letter will follow with more details of this fun filled day. Any proceeds from the day will be donated to St Damian's chosen charity for 2021 - Macmillan Cancer Support. As I write this, I am starting to prepare my costume. I am hoping that this day will go down in St Damian's folklore.

Key Stage Three National Tutoring Programme

A total of 150 KS3 pupils are taking part in additional Maths & English tuition run by a team of tutors from the Tutor Trust as part of the government funded National Tutoring Programme. The tuition includes pupils across the ability range. The programme was launched on the 26th April and will run through until the end of the Summer term. Pupils have covered a range of topic areas in Maths and have focused on vocabulary acquisition and creative writing in English. Tutors have been highly complimentary about the engagement and enthusiasm of the pupils they have been working with. Well done!

Safeguarding and Social Media

May I take this opportunity to remind parents about the use of Social Media. I want to highlight the fact that some pupils are using SM to send messages that they see as 'just banter' but the receivers of this may deem it to be Cyber-Bullying. It is never acceptable to be unkind or use language that may cause upset and distress online to other pupils. As you know, we are a strong Catholic community where respect is at the core. I ask parents to ensure that their children, if using SM, to do so in a manner that does not upset anyone else. The following website is a great resource for parents <https://www.childnet.com/parents-and-carers/hot-topics>. Thanks for your support in this.

General updates:

- *Attendance:* Our attendance over many years has always been fantastic, reflecting the fact that your children want to come to school as they want to learn and feel safe. However, when your child is absent could you please contact the school **before 9am** to report any absences. It is important that parents communicate with us their child isn't in school so that we know they are safe.
- *Uniform:* Again, just a reminder about our uniform. Our pupils look great in their uniforms and it shows that they have great pride in wearing it. May I take this opportunity to thank the parents in supporting the school. Our high standards are there to see. Every external visitor comments very positively when I tour the school with them. Remember that skirts should be of a reasonable length that earrings or any other visible piercing is not allowed. This is a simple rule and one which will be enforced.
- *Behaviour:* Again, a genuine thanks for supporting the school in upholding our high standards. This benefits everyone in school, but in particular, your child. High standards are reflected in the great relationships we have, the great pupil outcomes we consistently achieve and the great sense of Community that St Damian's is renowned for. Sadly, I do have to report that a small minority of pupils believe they do not have to follow our simple rules. This is most definitely not the case, and I will take appropriate action as necessary up to and including permanent exclusion. It's simply not fair that several pupils disrupt the learning of others.
- *Pupil Responsibility:* It is imperative that pupils take responsibility for their learning and develop personal organisational skills. In practical terms this means that they must arrive to school on time in the correct uniform and having the right equipment and this includes having a calculator. This shows a good attitude to learning, which is a pre-requisite for success.

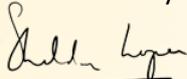
Literacy Update

Ensuring that children are literate is a key aspect of education at St Damian's. In essence, pupils who read and write, achieve! To support improving literacy, St Damian's has purchased an online digital library for all pupils. To access the library, click on the 'students' tab on the school website and then select 'library'. A document will come up that has a link to 'MyOn' the digital library service. Pupils need to type in the school name, their school email address and the password that their class teacher has given them. It is essential that all pupils are reading outside of school – this allows pupils to access new vocabulary in the correct context and also gain knowledge that will support them in lessons. I ask that parents help us to support your child, by encouraging them to read.

Finally...

On behalf of all the staff at St Damian's thanks for your overwhelming support. As a school we don't always get everything perfect, but we always aim to do so. I speak with great authority when I state that all the staff at St Damian's are working really hard to ensure your child's educational experiences and opportunities are 'world-class'. I truly believe we are a thriving and united Catholic Community. Hopefully, we have overcome the worst of the pandemic and I hope and pray that the easing of the lockdowns will continue in earnest as this is having a massive impact on both the great children at St Damian's and my great staff. As we move into the final half term I also pray for some sunshine as this has a positive impact on our well-being.

Your sincerely



Mr Logue
Headteacher