

July 2019

Dear Parents and Carers

A year of many great lifelong memories for our pupils

Once again this year our pupils have benefited from the many wonderful opportunities both within and beyond the curriculum. You can read about some of them in our Choice Filled Lives publication that will soon be available on our College website.

It includes articles with many pictures and greater detail on a few of the innumerable experiences which we have featured over the year on our St Mary's Twitter feed and the Latest News section of our website that was launched this year. I think it gives an essence of all we offer your children.

As you will be aware, we refer regularly to the SMCC Experience which we are committed to delivering in every year group across the whole of the year through the many curricular experiences as well as the extra-curricular enrichment delivered by our committed staff.

Currently we are building up to our SMCC Experience Week which will take place in the last week of term and culminates in our End of Year Mass which is always a highlight. Given the global challenges that have rightly enjoyed such a high profile in the news we have taken the theme of "Stewards of Creation".

I have enclosed a separate letter with fuller details of our great plans which promise a wonderful and meaningful experience for our pupils. The commitment and planning that has gone into this by our staff team is a tribute to how committed they are to your children. We will celebrate it on our Twitter and website as it happens.

Stable and full Teaching Staffing Complement

As I shared with you at this point last year, a significant benefit of being part of the Holy Family Catholic MAT is that we have been able to recruit and retain high quality staff and we will see the impact of this in the summer in a significant improvement in the results for our pupils in their GCSE examinations. I am pleased to report that we are in an equally strong position in September and will be able to build further on the changes that have become embedded through our revised systems and structures. Our learning programmes and their structure are focused on ensuring your children know and remember more which is crucial to future academic progression and success in public examinations.

The end of an era

As in any academic year in a school of this size there are some staff leaving. This year in fact it is only small numbers but it would be remiss of me not to mention one in particular who has given 31 years' outstanding service to our school community, Mick Brown.

Mick has held a number of roles in his time here culminating in his role as Deputy Headteacher where he has a crucial role in leading the Catholic life of our College. He is a member of our Catholic school community in every sense: he lives in our catchment area, sent his children to one of our local Catholic primary schools and then all four on to St Mary's and then on to university, is a stalwart of the local parish Holy Apostles and Martyrs and has always sought to be true to his vocational calling to be of service to young people. I have lost count of the number of our parents that remind him that he was once their RE teacher and indeed in recent years grandparents. His "jokes" on our Presentation Evening have been described in many terms but suffice to say they are often greeted by groans but it has not stopped him. It will never be the same again. We wish him a long, healthy and blessed well-earned retirement.

New PE Kit

I hope you agree that our pupils continue to look exceptionally smart in the "new" College uniform that was introduced in September 2017. Their appearance both within school but also in the community on their journeys to and from our College is a source of great pride for us all. Thank you for your ongoing support for this. I am writing now to let you know why and how the College PE kit is going to change.

How has the new PE kit been chosen?

We have had ongoing criticism from pupils and parents about the colour, appearance and durability of our current PE kit. Possible options for a new PE kit were sourced from local suppliers both in terms of fabric and style. The quality was assessed to ensure that the items would be robust enough to stand up to regular robust use and washing. The views of pupils were sought and pupils modelled the options for governors before the preferred PE kit options were identified. Competitive pricing was sought to ensure that the items would be affordable. At the end of this process our governors approved the new PE kit.

Why did you not change the PE kit at the same time as changing the College uniform?

At the time of its introduction governors were conscious that the new uniform and the introduction of a school bag were both very significant changes. Although a number of parents asked if we would contemplate it the College governors felt that they wanted to see the impact of the change in the uniform before making a change to the PE kit as well.

What does the new PE kit look like?

A page on our College website has been set up with images of the new boys' and girls' PE kits. The link is

<https://stmaryswallasey.com/st-marys-new-pe-kit/>

Are we expecting all pupils to be in the new PE kit in September 2019?

The new PE kit will be introduced as part of the uniform requirements for Year 7 in September 2019. Governors are aware that for existing pupils parents may not have been planning to replace all, if

any, of their child(ren)'s PE kit for September 2019 and are conscious of the possible unanticipated costs, consequently they have agreed that pupils can continue to wear the existing PE kit but please be aware that the old PE kit will become unavailable to purchase going forward and so, when the time does come to purchase new PE kit, it will only be possible to buy the new PE kit.

When you see our new PE kit and later when your son/daughter is wearing it, I think that you will agree that it looks incredibly smart and it complements perfectly our "new" College uniform.

Are all the elements of the new PE kit compulsory?

Item	Boys/Girls/Both	Optional / Compulsory
Aptus Navy/White Poloshirt (Girls'/Boys' Fit) with school badge	Both	Compulsory
Aptus Navy/White 1/4 Zip Top With School Badge	Both	Compulsory
Navy Tracksuit pants with school badge	Both	Optional
Navy shorts with school badge	Both	Compulsory
Navy/White socks	Both	Compulsory

Our local school uniform suppliers have been made aware of the new St Mary's PE kit items.

College uniform

Our pupils continue to look the smartest in the area in our "new" College uniform. To maintain our high standards of uniform and appearance I would like to remind you of our non-negotiables with respect to this.

All pupils are expected to return to school in September in full uniform including a College jumper. As you will know, pupils are currently allowed to choose to wear our summer uniform i.e. they do not have to wear their College jumpers, however, unless the weather is extremely hot we will begin the new academic year in full uniform.

NB If the weather is extremely hot at the start of term we will send out a text and post a message on the College website informing you about a jumper being optional for a short period of time but pupils will still need a jumper ready to wear.

Please remember that girls' skirts should be knee length, the skirts are designed to sit on the hips not high on the waist – they should not be folded over at the waist to shorten them. Skirts are available in a variety of lengths for each size, please ensure the length reaches your child's knees at the time of purchase. Jumpers must not be tucked into skirts, girls' socks should be plain navy with no bows. Hair accessories should be black or navy with no embellishments.

Converse type shoes, high top boots and trainers are not acceptable. Please be mindful of this when you are shopping for school shoes since some retailers have these shoes in their "school shoes" section, particularly some of the sportswear suppliers. Some shoes come with removeable bows; these bows must be removed for school.

The College uniform and examples of acceptable and unacceptable footwear are attached to this letter.

Our uniform suppliers are:

Wirral Uniform Centre, 2 Princes Pavement, Birkenhead

The Other Uniform Store, Brimstage Hall, Brimstage Road, Brimstage

Wallasey School Uniform Shop, Grosvenor Street, Wallasey

End of Term Arrangements

School will close on Friday 19th July at 12 noon. As has been the case for a number of years the College buses cannot alter the timetable for this day and so alternative arrangements may need to be made to get your child home safely on this day.
Brunch will be available for students on that day.

Start of Term Arrangements

School will reopen for pupils in Years 7 and 12 on Wednesday 4th September 2019 with pupils needing to be on site for 8.30am.

All the pupils will need to be in College on Thursday 5th September 2019 at 8.30am.

Can I thank you for all your support this year and wish you and your children a safe and happy summer break.

Yours faithfully

Mr A Boyle
Headteacher