

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we approach the end of this half term, I want to thank you for your support and provide some updates for the coming weeks. This half term has been a story of two halves; we have seen some fantastic achievements such as the year 11 'Maximise your potential' day, the College performance of '[Legally Blonde](#)' and the launch of our online parent information sessions. At the same time as these great achievements, we have also experienced our most difficult covid-related staffing issues since the start of the pandemic. This has been amplified by the national shortage of cover teachers and agency staff, which has been widely reported in the news.

In the main it has been our teachers, support staff and leadership team who have filled in the gaps alongside a core team of supply staff who have been working with us during this challenging time. It has been a real team effort across the college to ensure that the education and welfare of your children has not been negatively impacted and I owe a huge thanks to all the staff at the College for their support to ensure the College's smooth running. It is this team approach that will support us to become an outstanding provider of care and education to the young people that we serve.

Finally, I must thank the students for their contribution and engagement in College life. I never cease to be impressed by their aspirational and committed approach; both in the classroom, on stage and beyond.

### **Key updates**

#### **Inset day Friday 18th February**

This coming Friday is a staff INSET day, children should not attend the College on Friday 18th February.

#### **Attendance**

Before the pandemic, students at the College had developed very positive habits regarding attendance. Since the pandemic, attendance has declined nationally and schools across the country have seen much lower rates of attendance; even outside of the COVID related absence figures. All schools are being asked to strengthen their approaches to supporting attendance and as a result I am asking you to ensure that your child attends college everyday, unless national guidelines suggest they should not attend. To further support this we have introduced a new late to lesson system at the college to support attendance in lessons, this is having a great impact so far and we have seen far fewer disruptions in lessons.

#### **Communication update**

From the headteacher and parent/carer meetings in November home school communication was raised as an issue that you would like to see improve. Since then the following actions have been put in place.

- Regular emails are now being sent to update parents with upcoming events
- The second headteacher and parent/carer meetings have taken place
- Parent information sessions have been put in place to cover issues, such as supporting year [11 revision](#), supporting children's mental health and wellbeing and also SEND updates.
- We have added a list of upcoming dates to end of each letter
- We have also introduced the Arbor App. So far 37% of parents/carers have downloaded the app and we are receiving some great feedback. If you are yet to download the app please do so as this will really support daily communication. More information [here](#).

I will write out to you again in April to schedule the summer term headteacher meetings

## **Legally Blonde**

Congratulations to all of the staff and students involved in Legally Blonde. It was wonderful to see the students performing on stage once again. The entire college community came together to support the show and it was incredible. We are already starting to plan next year's performance! A link to the wiral globe story can be found [here](#).

## **Exam updates**

As we now move into the 'excel' stage of the Year 11 and 13 raising achievement plan there will be a number of additional exam preparation activities taking place. These will include enhanced booster sessions, Wednesday night live master classes and also the college will be open on a Saturday morning for independent learning and subject booster sessions.

Further to this exam boards have now released advanced information for GCSE qualifications for the summer 2022 exams. This is part of the package of support available for summer exams this year, in recognition of the disruption to education caused by the pandemic. The aim of advanced information is to help guide and prioritise your child's revision. It gives teachers information on the focus of the content of exams in summer 2022 for most subjects and will be used to focus learning and revision.

More general information can be found [here](#). Advance information for the different exam boards are here. [AQA](#) [OCR](#) [Edexcel](#) [Eduqas](#)

The Last phases of Mock Exams for Year 11 and Year 13 begin on March 7th. Timetables will be sent out to specific year groups in the coming term.

## **Year 9 Options Evening - Thursday 3rd March 5.30 -7.00**

Year 9 Options Evening will take place at the College on Thursday 3rd March, from 5.30pm - 7pm, you are invited to attend this in person. To make the evening as accessible and flexible as possible, the main presentation will be available online for you to watch before you arrive- rather than a ticketed event in the main theatre at an allocated time.

This video will outline how the options process works, what options are available and what pathways these options often support. It's really important that you and your child attend this event to give them the best introduction to this process and we do hope you can join us. Subject leaders and teachers will be available for you to talk to about specific choices during the evening too. As there will be no formal address I would encourage you to arrive at any time between 5:30pm and 7:00pm. This approach should also spread the flow of parents throughout the evening and assist with our covid control measures.

## **Covid Cases**

We are pleased to say that we have seen a drop in the number of COVID cases in the last week across the college. The picture across the whole school is a downward trend and we appreciate your support with "at home" testing.

## **Break Time Canteen Access**

We are pleased to inform you that we will be opening up the canteen to all year groups everyday during the next half term, this is likely to commence from Monday 7th March 2022. If you would like your child to be able to purchase food at breaktime please ensure their [Parent Pay](#) account is in credit. If your child is eligible to Free School Meals, this allowance will be available at lunchtime only.

### **Free School Meals**

A reminder that if you would like to apply for Free School Meals, more information is available here. If you would like support completing this application please contact [schooloffice@stmaryswallasey.com](mailto:schooloffice@stmaryswallasey.com)

### **School age immunisation clinics**

We have been asked by the Wirral School Age Immunisation Team to inform you that they will be offering school age vaccination clinics on **Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> February** at Victoria Central Health Centre, Wallasey and **Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> February** St Catherine's Health Centre.

These clinics are for all school age vaccinations

- [Covid-19 dose 1&2](#)
- [Diphtheria Tetanus Polio](#)
- [Meningitis ACWY](#)
- [MMR](#)
- [HPV](#)

### **Final note**

As the first true signs of Spring start to show themselves, it is a nice time of year to reflect on the changes that are to come. As we look forward to a season of newness and hope, we are asking all of our students to focus on what small changes they can make each day to support the college to be an outstanding place to work and learn. During our Inset day on Friday, we are looking at what makes us unique as a Catholic College and what the core values that will drive our success. I am looking forward to sharing these with you in a good time.

Sadly we are saying goodbye to two members of staff at the end of this half term; Mrs Hall and Mr Ritchie are leaving us this week to take up posts in other organisations. Both staff have worked at St Mary's for a number of years and have had a huge impact on our students. We are incredibly grateful for all that they have done for us at the College and I'm sure you will join me in wishing them well. When we come back after half term Mr Murray will be joining us in the PE department and Mr Lyon will be joining us in the Computer science department. I look forward to welcoming our new staff into the St Mary's community.

I hope you and your family have a restful break and I look forward to seeing the students back at the college on Monday 28th February.

Yours sincerely,

Mr K Maddocks  
Headteacher

### **Calendar Events**

To further support our communication strategy at the College I want to draw your attention to the events that are planned to take place during the next half term.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>
Friday 18 <sup>th</sup> February 2022	School Closed for Staff Training
Monday 21st - 25th February 2022	February Half Term
Monday 28th Feb	Spring Term 2 Starts
Thursday 3rd March	World Book day
Saturday 5th March	Saturday Revision School 9.30 - 11.30
Wednesday 9th - Thursday 10th March	Year 13 First Aid Course
Friday 11 March	Move It Dance Festival London Performing Arts Trip
Saturday 12th March	Saturday Revision School 9.30 - 11.30
Tuesday 15th March	Year 7 Enterprise Day
Wednesday 16th March	Year 8 Enterprise Day
Thursday 17th March	Year 12 Enterprise Day
Saturday 19th March	Saturday Revision School 9.30 - 11.30
Friday 8th April	Spring Term 2 Ends
Monday 11th April - Friday 22nd April	Easter Break
Monday 25th April - Friday 27th May	Summer Term 1

Further Dates can be found here. <https://stmaryswallasey.com/holidays-key-dates/>