



21st January 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

Re: Pastoral Update

I hope that this letter finds you well. We have enjoyed a great start to this term, with students continuing to work hard in lessons and contributing exceptionally well to the wider life of the school. We are so grateful for your ongoing support. As we approach the midway point in this academic year, I wanted to share some important information/reminders below.

Safeguarding

As you know, nothing is more important to us here at St Mary's than the health and safety of our students. We are committed to providing the best possible care and support for your child each and every day. Therefore, if you are ever worried or concerned, please contact your child's Head of Year. We have six Designated Safeguarding Leads here at St Mary's, including myself, alongside Mrs Latimer (Key Stage 3 Pastoral Leader), Mrs McKelvie (Key Stage 4 Pastoral Leader), Mr Turnbull (Assistant Headteacher Sixth Form), Miss Lague (Deputy Headteacher) and Miss Patterson (Headteacher). As part of our ongoing safeguarding work and commitment to keeping all of our students safe, students regularly receive safeguarding sessions, assemblies and lessons as part of the Personal Development Programme. We will continue to hold regular, online 'Parental Safeguarding Briefings' throughout this academic year and we will continue to notify you in advance of these sessions.

Attendance/Punctuality

As you know, excellent attendance and punctuality at school is vital to ensuring all students can reach their full potential and continue to develop their gifts and talents. Excellent attendance allows students to develop both holistically and academically, with exceptional punctuality ensuring students start the day positively. If your child will be absent from school, it is your responsibility to notify school on each day of their absence. If your child persistently arrives late to school, they will be sanctioned. We are proud that student attendance here at St Mary's is consistently high, especially compared to both regional and national figures, and we maintain these high standards so that our students can achieve the very best outcomes, both holistically and academically. There will of course be occasions when your child is too unwell to attend school and we thank you for your communication regarding this. If you are having any issues around your child's attendance at school, please do contact your child's Head of Year or our school's Attendance Officer, Mrs Clark.

Uniform

Student uniform is excellent across the school. We are so thankful for your daily support in this area. Just by way of reminder, students should only wear one pair of gold/silver studded earrings, students should not wear false nails/eyelashes and all students must carry a school bag large enough to carry an A4 folder. In addition, skirts should remain at their original length and should not be rolled up nor altered in length. We thank you for your support in this area.

School Car Park

Thank you for your ongoing support with school car park arrangements and for your patience during busy drop off times. Just by way of reminder, we continue to allow access to our school car park for parents/carers/relatives on a morning before school begins and we continue to monitor this. Could we politely ask that parents/carers/family members do not sit and wait in cars, but once you have dropped off your child, please then vacate the car park to help free up space. Students should use footpaths only and should therefore not walk across the roads or car park. We will continue to close the car park between 2.45pm and 3.30pm each day and limit access to the car park in order to ensure the health and safety of students, staff and parents/carers. Access between 2.45pm-3.30pm will only be permitted in extreme, exceptional circumstances. If you believe that you require access to the car park afterschool due to extreme exceptional circumstances then you may complete a request which will be considered by the school. Any access granted will be reviewed on a half termly basis. If you have not been granted access to the car park between 2.45pm-3.30pm, entry will not be permitted. As always, at all times, please only park in a disabled parking space if you have a 'Blue Badge'.

Local Area

In addition to the above polite reminders, could all parents/carers/family members please be mindful of where you park within the local area. Please do not block resident driveways and please avoid parking on pavements. Thank you.

Lost Property

Naturally within our large, busy secondary school environment, we do collect lost property that students may have accidentally left behind in different areas of the school. As per our usual practice, we will be next displaying lost property for students to view during break and lunchtime in the Atrium on Tuesday 28th January. If your child has lost any items in school, please encourage them to view our lost property collection during these times. Thank you for your help in this area.

Vapes

As reported widely in the media, vape use continues to rise amongst young people. Here at St Mary's, we will not tolerate any child having/using a vape either on the journey to/from school or on the school site. Over the past two weeks, we have discussed vape use and its damaging effects with all students during assemblies and Personal Development lessons, including the extremely harmful health implications of underage vape use. We have made it exceptionally clear to all students that any child found with a vape in their possession, or any child using a vape, will face the most severe consequences, including possible suspension. We thank you for your continued support in this area and we encourage regular dialogue with your child around this national issue.

Thank you very much for your continued support. We are absolutely thrilled with how brilliantly students have started this term and we are so proud of their amazing, ongoing achievements and contributions.

If you have any questions, worries or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact your child's Form Tutor or Head of Year.

Yours sincerely,



Mr J McDonald
Assistant Headteacher