



Trinity Catholic High School

Headmaster: Dr P C Doherty OBE, BA (Hons), DPhil (Oxon), FRSA

Tuesday 14th September 2021

Letter B

Dear Parents,

I am writing to you today, Tuesday 14th September, on this great feast of the Exultation of the Holy Cross. The Exultation of the Holy Cross can be understood in many ways but I wish to focus in this letter on what Christ says to his Apostles in last Sunday's Gospel as recorded by Saint Mark. Following Peter's declaration that Jesus was the Christ or the Messiah, which means 'Anointed One' or 'Chosen One' in Greek and Hebrew respectively, Christ states that 'If anyone wants to be a follower of mine, let him renounce himself and take up his cross and follow me.' (Mark 8:34) This image of the cross symbolises what we all need to do, those tasks that often weigh heavily on us but that we must shoulder and carry nonetheless.

In life, there is a constant push and pull as humans between what we want to do and what we need to do. In individuals who are at peace, that push and pull is at a harmonious balance. In individuals who are suffering, that push and pull is in conflict and they either do too much or too little of what they want to do, too much or too little of what they need to do, or both.

As Headmaster, I need to continue to pursue the vision I introduced forty years ago when I was first appointed. That vision is that what is good for my children, is good for yours. What I wanted for my children is a school where there is outstanding teaching and learning underpinned by exceptional pastoral care and the highest standards of behaviour. A key part of that is ensuring that no lesson is disrupted in anyway whatsoever and, where disruption does occur, it is dealt with quickly and effectively. I want all of our students to be nurtured and to flourish, but as part of that I also need to insist on the highest standards of behaviour and act decisively when these standards are challenged by any group or individual.

Consequently, it has been my habit for many years now to write a letter at the beginning of a new academic year such as this where I reaffirm some core principles regarding behaviour and other related matters.

Main School Office

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Praise

There has, is and always will be a focus of praise within the school. From my own Headmaster's Awards and Headmaster's Praise to curriculum awards of Best in Subject and Most Improved to pastoral awards of Student of the Week, Term or Year. During Covid-19, praise is something that was harder to facilitate and therefore praise, alongside extra-curricular, is something that we are focusing on developing and enhancing further this academic year. Consequently, I would be grateful if parents could communicate to the school any achievements of their children outside of school so these can be rightfully acknowledged by the school.

Birthdays

Similarly, it has always been my tradition to meet students on their birthday to present them with a card, some treats and playing my small part in ensuring their birthday is as special as possible. Again, I would be grateful if parents could remind their children that if their birthday falls on a school day, then on that day they should report to the Main Office in Trinity House on Upper-Site so that I may see them.

Religious Life

Morning Mass continues to be celebrated at 08:20am each day at the Lower Site Chapel. All students are welcome to attend. Do come to pray for your own intentions, those of the school as well as those of the wider world.

The Chapel of the Holy Spirit on the Upper Site is open for students during break or lunchtime. The Blessed Sacrament is also reserved here where Eucharistic Adoration takes place each week.

Eucharistic Adoration

Each Wednesday Lunch time on alternate sites, Eucharistic Adoration takes place in our chapels, allowing students and staff the opportunity to adore Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. Please take this opportunity to spend time in God's presence.

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Chaplaincy

Mr. Connolly, as Assistant Headteacher & Director of Religious Life, oversees our Chaplaincy team, which includes our Chaplaincy Coordinator, Mr. McCarthy, Ms. Worrall, and a number of Sixth Formers, trained and commissioned in Sacristy preparation, Proclamation of the Word and as Eucharistic Ministers.

Students will have a number of opportunities throughout the year to celebrate the Sacraments during the liturgical calendar, especially during holydays of obligations, solemnities, feast days, take part in Lenten and advent liturgies, and enjoy the opportunity to go on retreats and pilgrimage.

The Tauists

Every Friday, at 12.10pm the Tauists meet in the Lower Site Chapel. They are given a rosary, crucifix badge and prayer cards and we say a few prayers before the Blessed Sacrament. New members are most welcome, particularly from Year 7.

Attendance

The target attendance for each student at Trinity is 100%, that is to attend school every day, to maximise learning, especially following the disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Of course, there are valid reasons for students to be absent from school but these should be the exception. For information, the average attendance of a Trinity student is 96% and, in many year groups, it is often higher. If your child is facing challenges in school, them being absent will only exacerbate not alleviate these challenges. In such circumstances, parents should contact the relevant Head of Year and work together to address any issues.

Punctuality

Students must arrive at their classroom at the time the next period begins. Consequently, staff will direct students to make their way to their classroom a couple of minutes before the next period begins. Regarding Period 1, the expectation is that students should be on the site of their Period 1 lesson by 8:50am. From Friday 17th September, which marks most students having returned to school for a fortnight, the parents of students, Years 7 – 11, who are late to any lesson will receive a formal notification

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students who are late must report to the relevant Sixth Form office to have their diary stamped before they are admitted to a lesson. An appropriate sanction will also be issued.

Uniform

I have always been very proud of how the vast majority of our students wear their uniform in accordance with our uniform policy throughout the school day. These students are a credit to our community and a visible sign of our high standards to visitors and members of the public. However, there are a small minority of students who continue to challenge our high standards. Starting with lunchtime detentions, these students will face increasingly severe sanctions as fundamentally they are not just challenging our uniform policy, but my authority as Headmaster. Consequently, like behaviour or punctuality, there is no upper limit to the severity of sanction for a student that persistently, and wilfully, defies our clear expectations. As in all I have written, I would continue to ask parents to support the school in ensuring the highest standards of uniform for their children.

Behaviour

Our students represent you as their parents and myself as Headmaster. They represent their school and Catholic education as a whole. Consequently, their behaviour must be exemplary both in and out of the classroom. Most importantly, student behaviour must support rather than disrupt the fundamental process of teaching and learning. With the relaxing of Covid-19 measures, I have reintroduced the Cloisters Reflection Room and appointed Ms Sam Sivan as Behaviour Mentor to manage this key initiative as well as support key students with their behaviour in liaison with the rest of the pastoral team. I can assure parents that the decision to withdraw a student from a lesson will always be made by a senior member of staff acting in my name and that decision will never be lightly undertaken. In addition, students who cannot behave at break or lunchtime will be issued lunchtime detentions and, if their inappropriate behaviour continues, will face increasingly serious sanctions including working under the supervision of senior staff at lunchtime for a sustained period of time.

Commuting

Students must commute to and from school and between sites in a manner that reflects the high standards of you their parents and that of their school. Students should be mindful of each other and especially

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members of the public to whom they are ambassadors of the school. Students commuting to and from school must do so in full uniform and students should neither meet friends in the vicinity of the school nor loiter in the vicinity of the school. The vicinity of the school is considered to be from the golf course to Woodford station and from Bancroft's School to the Castle area. Students should only commute from one site to the other if their lesson is on the other site. At lunchtime, students should commute at 11:50 and then have their lunch. The only current exceptions to this are Year 7 who should have their lunch at 11:40 and then commute by midday as required and of course Sixth Form students who may leave either site at lunchtime if they wish. Students should not commute for any other reason or at any other time unless they have the express permission of a member of staff.

Having said all of the above, I must be very clear that all of the above will be undertaken with the individual needs of each student at the core of every decision made regarding that student, a fundamental component of our pastoral care. In life, there is always the exception, and when these instances arise, the school will give every consideration. Balanced against this is the school's ambition for each and every student and the pursuit of the highest standards which I have outlined above. It is important that these high standards are reemphasised at the beginning of a new academic year to ensure that home and school are working towards the same, clear objectives for the betterment of your children, our students, in providing them with an outstanding education and the very best start to their lives.

May I thank you in advance for reading this letter and discussing it in advance with your children.

May God bless us and keep us safe.

Yours sincerely,

Dr P C Doherty OBE DPhil (Oxon)

Headmaster

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