



17th July 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

Re: End of Academic Year 2020

This year has been unprecedented. We have seen new phrases appear which would have made no sense before March 2020; unprecedented, self-isolation and social distancing. Obviously, most of this year has been dominated by the partial school closure. We have remained open every day including holidays and bank holidays for our keyworker and vulnerable children.

Reflecting on this academic year it is easy to forget all the good things that have happened both before March and after. The new Chapel works at the heart of the school, celebrating our value of Faith, were completed to remind us that "With God all things are possible". Bishop Mark visited us to formally open our new Chapel, he said "It was a great joy to return to St James' after a number of years". We had our first whole school mass for several years in December, this was made possible by the kind and generous donation by Fr Peter from St Peter's parish in Hazel Grove.

The production this year was the Addams Family and was a fantastic showcase of the talents of our staff and students alike. This year our offer of Careers Information Education and Guidance has improved dramatically at St James' with careers breakfasts being enjoyed by many students. So much work, driven by our faculty leaders, around curriculum has taken place. The curriculum has been refined and now shows such a clear pathway for learning all the way through KS3 into KS4. The PE department continues to be a central part of school. 391 of our pupils represented St James' in sporting activities last year. An amazing 49% of the entire school roll. Our students' dedication was vital in helping us secure the GOLD School Games Mark for our commitment, engagement and delivery of competitive school sport. We were one of only two secondary schools to achieve this prestigious award in Stockport.

As we look ahead at what is to come in the next academic year, we firstly have GCSE results day. A reminder that school is closed on this day and that students will be receiving their results via email. This in itself will be "unprecedented". As we start September, staff will be conscious that many students have not been into school since March. As practitioners we will need to keep this in mind as we begin to deliver "normal" lessons again but also be acutely aware of the mental wellbeing of our children.

I would like to take this opportunity to offer my most sincere thank you to all students, parents and staff who have supported the school this year. We will be welcoming our Year 7 students back to school at 8.30am on Wednesday 2nd September, our Year 7, 10 and 11 students on Thursday 3rd September and all year groups on Friday 4th September. May I wish you all a peaceful and restful summer and ask that you keep our Year 11 students in your prayers as they receive their results on Thursday 20th August.

Yours faithfully

Mr A Pontifex
Headteacher