



ST JAMES'
CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

4th March 2024

Dear Parent/Carer

Re: Spring Term Week 8 Headteacher Update

Last Friday, 1st March, was Secondary School Offer Day where children in Primary schools found out whether or not they had secured a place at their chosen High School. This year was the most competitive year in the history of the school with 655 applications for 165 places. This is a significant increase on the increase we saw last year. This clearly demonstrates how our exceptional school is viewed by the local community. The number of children applying to St James' has more than doubled since 2019 and hence it is so competitive for places at our great school. We are delighted to be welcoming our September 2024 Year 7 cohort to the St James' family and we are already working closely with Primaries to ensure that their transition is smooth and seamless.

Yesterday was the third Sunday of Lent, we reflect on the Gospel readings that speak of repentance. Our Catholic secondary school family encourages children to use this Lenten period to turn away from distractions and develop the virtues that define a life rooted in faith. Let us embrace the challenge to repent and turn our hearts towards God, recognising that it is through this process that we grow towards positive change. May this week be an opportunity for us to develop goodwill in our hearts.

As a Diocesan school we are asked to support Caritas in their Good Shepherd appeal this Lent. Caritas do fantastic work with schools, health and social care agencies and the voluntary sector. The Community Support Service supports children and families to overcome adversity and disadvantage they face, particularly where these are affecting their emotional well-being, mental and physical health. Caritas work holistically, helping families to overcome a wide range of daily challenges and they do this through one-to-one and group work or working jointly with other appropriate agencies. Whether it be counselling, listening ear, bereavement, or community support groups, the support offered empowers families to effect lasting change and enjoy a happier family life. Caritas relies on funding, and schools remain one of their most important sources of income, especially in their annual Good Shepherd Appeal, enabling them to continue their work helping those in need. We will be organising an Easter fundraiser here in school and would be grateful for any donations of chocolate (chocolate bars, Easter eggs, boxes of chocolate) for a raffle we will organise. These donations can be handed in to your child's Form Tutor. If you wish to make a monetary donation, you may do so via ParentPay. As always, we are grateful for any support you can offer.

Over the next couple of weeks we have a number of different events planned as part of our Personal Development curriculum. Our School Council team have a careers talk with Councillor Mark Hunter, Year 8 have a Knife Crime awareness session, Year 9 will be taking part in our Careers Cafe and a group of Year 10 children will be visiting Manchester Metropolitan University for a campus tour.

We have an exciting week ahead with a range of activities planned to celebrate and promote World Book Day on Thursday 7th March. The St James' Book Swap is a week-long event where children and staff donate used books and make donations to Cafod before selecting and taking a pre-loved book. There will be a 'Favourite Books Treasure Hunt' where pupils scour the school for clues to work out which books are the favourites of different members of staff - all completed treasure hunt lists are then entered into the prize draw. We will 'Drop Everything and Read' at five points throughout the day - the pupils will hear a short story that has been divided into five parts so they get to hear the next instalment in each lesson of the school day. There will be a wide range of activities taking place in the library: book quizzes, extract and title match ups, bookmark decorating, to name just a few. As in previous years, we will also have members of staff embracing the theme



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of literary icons through costume and fancy dress - a brilliant opportunity to engage the children in discussion about books and reading! With reading for enjoyment firmly placed as a priority at St James', this is a fantastic event to raise the profile of reading and engage all children with a range of texts and activities.

I would like to kindly remind everyone about the importance of responsible parking during drop-off and pick-up times. For the safety of our children and the efficient flow of traffic, I kindly request that you refrain from parking on the school site. Instead, I encourage you to park a short distance away and walk your children to school. Regrettably, last week, there was an incident where a parent/carer parked their car on our school premises and abandoned it, causing disruption to the bus schedule. This not only inconveniences everyone but also poses a safety risk, as emergency vehicles may be impeded from accessing the school site. Your cooperation in this matter is greatly appreciated.

A reminder that our Parent Forum takes place in school this evening at 6pm with Dr Guscott. All information has previously been sent but if you would like to secure a place or raise any issues please email s.guscott@stjamesheadle.co.uk.

Have a great week and thank you for your continued support, if you need anything please do not hesitate to get in touch headteacherpa@stjamesheadle.co.uk

Yours faithfully

Mr A Pontifex
Headteacher