

St Matthew Academy

St Joseph's Vale, Blackheath, London SE3 0XX

Headteacher: Ms Miranda Baldwin

Head of Primary: Ms Joanna Chick



16 December 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

We find ourselves at the end of perhaps the most unusual term ever at St Matthew Academy. A term of bubbles and hand sanitiser; face coverings and staggered lunches. Despite all this however, there is still a great deal to celebrate at St Matthew Academy, not least the resilience, collective spirit and hard work displayed by our pupils every day to ensure we get through this difficult time together.

This term in Year 7, amongst many other things, our first virtual Parents' Evening was held on Thursday, 10th December. Over 93% of parents took the opportunity to sign up for School Cloud conversations with their child's tutor. These 'face to face' conversations were a great success, with many pupils and parents extolling the virtues of the new format. Something for us to think about for future events.

Other success and celebrations this term in Year 7 include:

We were delighted that six of our pupils were selected to participate in Skylark leadership programme. During this term, they had an opportunity to learn how to survive in the wilderness, or as we call it Forrest School, build fires and water filters, explore local parks and learn about the wild life, enjoy canoeing and climbing training, and above all how to be a part of a team. Isabella, Abdul, Richard and

Our year 7 pupils are avid readers and as such are top of the academy with the amount of books borrowed and read. We sincerely hope this trend will continue. It is a lovely sight to walk around the year 7 bubble and see so many pupils engrossed in their novels.

We have discovered amazing artists amongst us. Year 7 pupil Shaely Jovial won the Black Lives Matter t-shirt design competition with her amazing drawing. Other year 7 pupils are involved in various art projects and have an opportunity to shine their light through the incredible work they do.

In spite of difficult times pupils persevered and an amazing 40% are still going strong with 100% attendance. Well done to all.

Key Dates for Next Term

Tuesday, 5th January – all pupils return to school

Wednesday, 6th January – Secondary Head Teacher's Rewards Lunch for invited pupils

Monday, 15th February – Friday, 19th February – half term

Important New Arrangements for the School Day – Year 7

The following information outlines new arrangements for pupils in Year 7 next term. Please read carefully.

- Line up: **8.20am** (outside the Sports Hall in the back playground)
- Start time: **8.35am**
- Lunchtime: **12.00pm-12.50pm**
- Dismissal: **2.55pm**
- Tutor Detention dismissal: **3.15pm**
- Director of Learning Detention dismissal: **3.55pm**
- SLT Detention dismissal: **4.55pm**

Please, could parents and carers ensure their children arrive on time and take the difficult traffic situation in our community into account when planning what time to leave home. Whenever possible, pupils should walk or cycle to the Academy however we realise that many of our pupils must take the bus or train to get to school. Parents and carers should also remind their children that the wearing of face coverings is compulsory on public transport (and should also be worn while waiting at the bus stop). These coverings must not be used on the school site but instead stored safely for use on the journey home.

In order to prevent unnecessary bus use in the morning and afternoon, pupils in the secondary phase will not be permitted to use the bus stop outside the bowling alley in Lewisham. It is only two stops to our site therefore we encourage all our pupils to walk. At the end of the day only those pupils needing to use the 54 bus to go beyond Lewisham should use the bus stop opposite St Joseph's Vale.

Pupils will also be asked not to use the 89 and 108 buses to keep as safe as possible and relieve the pressure on public transport at this time. These buses only travel two stops and terminate in Lewisham.

On arrival at the top of St Joseph's Vale, all pupils should avoid gathering in the car park at Majestic Wine and instead, make their way carefully down St Joseph's Vale on the right hand pavement, making way for members of the public, before crossing over at the zebra crossing. It is important that pupils follow this expectation to allow Primary pupils to use the pavement on the left hand side and to keep the pupils in each phase separated as much as possible.

As Ms Baldwin commented in her letter last week, there have been a number of reports of anti-social behaviour in the local community involving some of our pupils over the last half term. We understand that the vast majority of our pupils follow expectations and behave in a responsible and sensible manner when traveling to and from the Academy. However, there remains a small group of pupils who regularly bring the reputation of the Academy into disrepute due to their poor conduct in the local area; in takeaway shops and on the buses. We expect all pupils to go straight home after school and we remind you that, as in previous years, pupils should not be using Blessington Road as a short cut to Lee High Road. Please ensure that your child is not in Lewisham town centre after 3.45pm. This is of vital importance given the current Tier 2 restrictions.

More Important Reminders:

1. Uniform Reminders

Please could I also remind you of our uniform expectations at St Matthew Academy. These expectations are in place to ensure that uniform does not become a distraction from learning and that pupils at St Matthew Academy, take pride in themselves and their school:

- Black shoes not boots for all pupils
- Tailored trousers or SMA kilts for girls
- Black or blue coats without insignia for all pupils
- Lanyards and ID badges (these can be purchased for £3.00 in the event they are lost) for all pupils
- SMA face coverings (these can be purchased for £1.00 in the event they are lost) for all pupils

2. St Matthew Academy Behaviour Sanctions

Detentions will be running every evening. The incremental scale for detentions is as follows:

- 1 Behaviour Point in the day = Form Tutor Detention (20 minutes)
- 2 Behaviour Points in the day = Centralised Detention (1 hour)
- 3 Behaviour Points in the week = Friday SLT Detention (2 hours)
- 4+ Behaviour Points in the week = Saturday Detention (8.40-11.40)
- Missed Saturday Detention = BSR for 1 day

Extracurricular Activities

Over the course of the coming term, we are hoping to phase back in more of our extracurricular clubs and activities. Extracurricular enrichment activities are an incredibly important part of our offer so, as in previous years, St Matthew Academy will be offering a wide variety of after school clubs, from sports to debating and from creative arts to homework. Please watch out for more news over the coming weeks as these activities become, once again, an important part of the landscape at St Matthew Academy.

Finally, as we approach the end of term and the beginning of the Christmas holidays, it is important that we all find time to reflect on the year that has past. For many it has been the most difficult of times: perhaps losing loved ones, a time of lives turned upside down and the disruption of what we have hitherto taken for granted on an unprecedented scale. Throughout it all, our community continues to stay strong and we will enter the New Year in the knowledge that working together we can continue to protect our young people and provide them with the very best educational experience we can.

I wish you all a safe, peaceful and happy Christmas.

Yours faithfully



Mr Gunningham
Assistant Headteacher – Key Stage 3