

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 8, amongst many other things, we held our first virtual Parents' Evening on Thursday, 3rd December. The majority 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. Definitely something for us to think about for future events.

Other Year 8 successes and celebrations this term include:

The Year 8 Pupil Ambassadors have been appointed and they wear their badges with pride. They are role models and they are looking forward to taking a hands-on approach to leadership in and around the Academy next term.

Well done to Hanako, Prince and Louise for being finalists in our Black History Month t-shirt competition. Out of so many entries across all the Year Groups, we are proud that these three pupils from Year 8 made it to the final. To top it off, Hanako was the overall winner!

We also congratulate the following pupils for having an impeccable attendance record. They have not missed a day since starting in Year 7!

Matthew, Deborah, Alyssa, Tejiri, Abigail, Cassel, Andy, Daisy, Tianna F, Alexia, Haliya, Andrew, Bradley M, Jayden N, Gift, Paapa, Hillary and Rapolas.

The Year 8 pupils have worked so hard to be 'Consistently Excellent' and we have celebrated more and more pupils being given dozens of achievement points weekly. We were very pleased to hand out a number of bronze and silver stars for achievement points this term. Over 40% of our Year 8 cohort have reached or surpassed 90 achievement points. A special well done to Huray who has become the first pupil in the school to achieve a gold star. Gift is right behind him with a gold star this term too. It is rare that a pupil achieves over 200 achievement points in the first term. They have all clearly been letting their lights shine!

Key Dates for Next Term

Tuesday, 5th January – All pupils return to school

Wednesday, 6th January – Headteacher's Rewards Lunch for invited pupils

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

Important New Arrangements for the School Day – Year 8

The following information outlines new arrangements for pupils in Year 8 next term. Please read carefully.

- Morning line up: **8.45am** (in the front courtyard)
- Lunchtime: **12.55pm-13.45pm**
- Dismissal: **3.05pm**

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

: 0208 853 6250 : info@stmatthewacademy.co.uk : www.stmatthewacademy.co.uk : @stmattacad

The St Matthew Academy Limited. A company limited by guarantee whose registered office is situated at St Joseph's Vale, Blackheath, London, SE3 0XX
Registered in England no 5144640 Vat registration no 117 5465 13

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 move to Tier 3 restrictions.

More Important Reminders:

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

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 plus Saturday detention completed the following week

Extracurricular Activities

Over the course of the coming term, we are hoping to phase back 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 pupils, parents and carers of Year 8 a safe, peaceful and happy Christmas.

Yours faithfully



Mr Gunningham
Assistant Headteacher – Key Stage 3