

St Matthew Academy

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

Headteacher: Ms Miranda Baldwin

Head of Primary: Ms Joanna Chick



11 September 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

Further to my letter last week I am delighted to report back on our first full week '*back to school*' for pupils and staff at SMA. I have been truly impressed with the pupils who have all dealt so positively with the changes they have faced. For many year groups life at SMA has changed significantly – for example different start and finish times, new lunch routines and for years 7, 8 & 9 minimal movement around the building. The pupils have been fantastic and have adapted speedily to all the new procedures in place to keep the entire SMA community safe. It has also been really exciting to welcome new pupils to SMA – our year 7s look super smart in their shiny, extra-long armed, new blazers. The reception pupils have settled in to their fantastic new classrooms and our pupils transferring from IAG have all been very positive about their first few days at SMA. I would like to formally welcome all new parents and carers to the SMA community and look forward to building strong working relationships with you all. Our new year 7 parents should look out for an invite next week to a virtual parent meeting when you can ask questions, share feedback and speak with some of our parent champions.

As you are aware we have introduced staggered arrival and dismissal times for all pupils – on the whole this has worked really well and ensured that year groups remain apart. However, this change has resulted in a couple of concerns that we will need your support with. Firstly, the amount of traffic on St Joseph's Vale is a safeguarding concern. Drivers should be considerate of local residents, pedestrians, pupils and other parents/carers when dropping off and picking up from school.

As the school car park is for staff cars only and St Joseph's Vale is a narrow, no-through road with restricted parking it would be preferable for parents and carers to avoid using the road. Please note that we have requested more regular patrols from the safer transport team to ensure we keep the locality safe and these teams are able to issue fixed penalty notices for traffic offences. I would encourage all families to walk or cycle to school where possible. Secondly, there have been a number of pupils repeatedly late to school this week. I understand the traffic issues in Lewisham are frustrating at the moment but I urge all parents and carers to ensure their child leaves for school with plenty of time to spare. Most secondary pupils no longer have a morning registration so if they are late this means they are missing subject lesson time – they cannot afford to do this as their learning will suffer.

Enclosed with this letter is our termly newsletter – SMA news. As I said last week I hope you have had an opportunity to read about the fabulous KS4 achievements of SMA pupils on our website but if you haven't you will find articles about pupils' achievements from all phases of the Academy. I am so proud of the aspiration and hard work of all of our pupils and I hope you will enjoy finding out a bit more about just some of them. You will also find a really interesting article about transition – both at reception and year 7.

Finally, can I take this opportunity to remind parents and carers that if you wish to speak with a member of staff at the Academy then this can only be done by emailing or ringing reception. Please bear in mind that teaching staff are not usually available during the teaching day as they must remain focused on their primary role, to deliver high quality lessons resulting in outstanding progress for your children.

Thank you, as always, for your support. Staff at SMA look forward to working with you all, our families, over the coming year. Times may be uncertain, but I am confident that working together we will meet and overcome challenges that may be ahead.

Yours faithfully

Ms M Baldwin
Headteacher

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