

28 March 2017

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope you will find time to read the second edition of our SMA newsletter this academic year. It is a bumper edition celebrating a wide range of pupil achievements and talents. Please share the highlights with friends, family and neighbours – it is important that we all take every opportunity to remind others about how fabulous our pupils are.

There are a couple of key messages that I would like to share with you in this letter. The first one is regarding homework expectations for secondary pupils. The academy views homework as an integral part of the educational offer made to students. Completing homework will allow students to:

- consolidate and extend work covered in class or prepare for new learning activities
- access resources not available in the classroom
- develop research skills
- have an opportunity for independent work
- show progress and understanding
- provide feedback to the teacher in the evaluation of teaching
- enhance their study skills e.g. planning, time management and self-discipline
- take ownership and responsibility for learning

The majority of our pupils are developing excellent habits and routines regarding homework. However we feel that there is always room for improvement and we are always striving to raise our expectations even higher for all of our pupils. With this in mind, below is the revised standards we are expecting of our pupils regarding homework. All pupils have now had their negative points reset for homework (13/3/17) and they will now have to meet the following expectations.

Number of negative points for homework	Sanction
4	Letter and Saturday Morning detention
6	Letter and required attendance in Library HW club for 2 weeks
7 to 9	Parent meeting – Each HW detention from the meeting onwards is an additional Early Morning Detention (8am until line up)
10 or more	Homework ban across all departments

Secondly, I would like to remind all parents and carers about our policy on mobile phones and other electronic items. Pupils in primary are expected to hand these items in to their teacher at the start of the day and secondary pupils are expected to ensure all items are out of sight and switched off before they pass through the academy gates. If a pupil is seen with a phone or electronic item then it will be confiscated and locked away and the incident recorded. Items will be returned to the pupils after one week unless the parent/carer of the child arranges to meet the member of staff, and in this case it can be returned after 24 hours. Any phones or electronic items that are confiscated a second or further time will always be kept for one week and then returned to a parent/carer only.

Finally, now that the evenings are getting lighter can I make another plea to all parents and carers to ensure your children go straight home from school. As already stated in previous letters pupils are no longer permitted to be in Lewisham town centre after 3.45pm; senior staff from the Academy will maintain regular patrols within the local area, and any pupil found to be in Lewisham after this time will be sanctioned. There have been many instances this term where pupils have been found in local takeaway outlets purchasing unhealthy meals rather than eating at school and I therefore urge parents to refrain from giving pupils money to spend in local shops. As you are aware we will be operating a cashless school from September 2017, after Easter our cash loaders will not accept the new £1 coin and this means that parents and carers will find it much easier to pay for lunch and trips/visits online.

We say goodbye to a couple of staff at the end of this term. Firstly I'd like to take this opportunity to say thank you Mrs LeRoux who has worked tirelessly at the academy over the last 9 years. In her role as a high profile Deputy Headteacher she has focused on curriculum and assessment issues across the academy and ensured Year 11 pupils left with results to be proud of. In the secondary phase we thank Mr Lynch (PE teacher), Ms Mukasa (Geography teacher), Ms Quinn (RE teacher), Mr O Halloran (DOL Year 9) and Mr Anyanwu (Science) for their work at the academy and wish them well as they move on to new opportunities. I am pleased to announce that although we have a number of valued staff leaving at the end of this term we have made a number of key staff appointments in recent weeks and we will be looking forward to these staff joining us next term and in September 2017.

As we reach the end of term I am sure parents, carers and pupils will share with me in thanking all the staff for their continuing hard work and commitment, enabling St Matthew Academy students to excel. I'd also like to thank parents and carers for their continued support and partnership work with the academy. This support and work takes many forms – from baking cakes for staff on inset day, attending parent information meetings to active involvement in charity events. All of this support is crucial if we are going to ensure all of our pupils leave the academy having achieved their very best.

We return to the academy for learning at 8.35am on Tuesday 18th April 2017. We expect to see all students on time, wearing their full uniform smartly and correctly equipped for learning. We have photographers in on that day so that we have updated shots for our new website – parents and carers have already indicated on our admissions form if they do not give permission for their child to be photographed – if there are any changes to that information then please email the school office on info@stmatthewacademy.co.uk. It is going to be a crucial term for all pupils across the academy with important external exams to be sat by many year groups; internal exams and assessments for others; Year 8 pupils will be making important decisions about future GCSE pathways and Year 10 pupils will gain their first experience of life beyond school when they undertake a week of work experience.

Very best wishes to you all for a restful Easter break. I look forward to seeing many of you at the next Parent Forum meeting at 6.30pm on Monday 22nd May 2017 when we will be discussing plans for the formation of a new Parent and Teacher Group.

Best wishes



Miranda Baldwin
Head of School