

St Matthew Academy

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

Headteacher: Ms Miranda Baldwin

Head of Primary: Ms Joanna Chick



12th January 2024

Dear Parents and Carers

Firstly, I would like to wish everybody in our community a very Happy New Year, pupils have made a great start back to school and all staff have given great feedback on how lessons have started. As you know, we are living in challenging times as the news from around the world has confirmed however we have a great deal to look forward to in 2024, a year in which I hope all at St Matthew Academy will fulfil their aspirations and ambitions for the future.

This term, one of our key priorities will remain the punctuality of our pupils. As you know, it is imperative that all our pupils arrive at the Academy, ready for learning by 8:30am at the latest. Line up takes place at 8:35am so pupils arriving after this time are deemed to be late and will have to sign in. Whilst we have excellent attendance figures overall, punctuality has been an issue, which needs to be tackled, in short we need your help to ensure that your children arrive at SMA at the right time.

To encourage pupils to be on time in the morning, the school have arranged for free porridge available to all pupils from 8:00 am until 8:20 am. Breakfast is a very important part of the day and porridge is a great option to support pupils in having a healthy and positive start to their day. Pupils will be able to purchase other breakfast items at this time in the canteen.

Linked to punctuality and attendance, is making sure that your children travel to and from the Academy safely. There has been a spate of thefts in Lewisham recently of a number of 'prestige' items being carried by schoolchildren. These items include designer coats, expensive headphones and of course mobile phones. Please talk to your children about their safety on the streets as they make their way to and from the Academy. Coats should be black or dark blue and not have designer labels; phones should be out of sight, as should headphones. It is an unfortunate fact that secondary school children in Lewisham have had items like these stolen, so it is important that we work together to minimise the risk for our pupils.

Another big push this term is the pupils' equipment. Pupils should be equipped and be responsible for their own stationery. This should include a clear pencil case, writing pens containing black ink, pencils, a compass, a protractor and a ruler. Highlighters are also an important part of the kit pupils should have with them. Calculators should also be carried and we recommend that pupils have a Casio FX-83GT, which is available in a variety of colours and can be purchased from a wide range of retailers. Being properly equipped for learning is fundamental for success and is an expectation of all pupils at St Matthew Academy.

As ever, we expect high standards of uniform at SMA this term. I have already mentioned that coats should be blue or black with no designer labels and further to this could I remind you that our expectations as defined in our uniform policy, which can be found on our website, have not changed. Pupils must demonstrate that they are ready to learn by being in the correct uniform when they arrive at SMA in the morning. This includes no jewellery; having a sensible school bag; wearing black leather shoes without adornments; their lanyard and ID badge around their collar and of course being properly equipped. Please see the uniform policy on our website for further details.

Important events for Years 7 and 8 that are coming up include:

- **Tuesday 23rd January 2024 - Early Closure for all Secondary Pupils at 1:50pm**
- **Monday 12th February to Friday 16th February - Half Term**
- **Monday 18th March - Year 8 assessment week**
- **Wednesday 27th March - Year 8 Human Papilloma Virus vaccination**
- **Tuesday 16th April - Year 7 Assessments begin**

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So, 2024 is underway and may I wish you all the very best for the coming year. Please remember to look out for emails and texts regarding upcoming events. The [SMA website](#) will also have regular updates about what is going on at our school. In the meantime, stay in touch and we look forward to speaking with you soon.

Yours faithfully



Mr F Magar
Deputy Headteacher