

St Matthew Academy

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

Headteacher: Ms Miranda Baldwin

Head of Primary: Ms Joanna Chick



19th February 2024

Dear Parents and Carers

As we are now at the halfway mark of the academic year, I wanted to take this opportunity to update you on the progress and upcoming events for our Year 10 pupils.

Firstly I am pleased to inform you that our Year 10 pupils have recently completed their work experience placements. This invaluable opportunity allowed them to gain practical insights into various professions and industries, helping them to explore potential career paths and develop essential skills for the future. We look forward to discussing their experiences with them and hearing about the lessons they have learned.

Additionally I am delighted to report that our Year 10 pupils performed admirably during the recent assessment week. Their hard work and dedication were evident, and we commend them for their commitment to their studies. These assessments provide valuable feedback for both pupils and teachers, allowing us to identify areas of strength and areas for improvement as we progress through the academic year.

Looking ahead, we have several important events and initiatives planned for our Year 10 pupils. In the coming weeks, we will be conducting workshops to prepare pupils for college applications. These workshops will provide guidance on creating personal statements, navigating the application process, and highlighting their skills and achievements effectively.

Furthermore, preparations for prefect applications and interviews are underway. We encourage all interested pupils to participate in this leadership opportunity, which plays a vital role in fostering responsibility and initiative among our pupils. In May, our Year 10 pupils will assume the role of the oldest year group in the school. This transition presents an excellent opportunity for them to demonstrate leadership qualities and set a positive example for their peers.

This summer, Year 10 pupils will sit their first GCSE in RE and will go onto sit their first pre-public examinations in preparation for their GCSEs in Year 11. These exams are an essential milestone in their academic journey, and we will continue to provide support and guidance to ensure they feel prepared and confident.

Throughout the remainder of the year, we will also continue to monitor pupils' punctuality and attendance closely. Regular attendance and punctuality are crucial for academic success, and we appreciate your support in reinforcing the importance of these habits at home.

In order to embrace all members of our school community, we have acted upon our LGBT+ training and will be launching the Rainbow club after half term. Pupils will be reminded to speak to staff wearing the Rainbow badges to register their interest on a voluntary basis. Meetings will commence later in the half term in order to establish a space for our pupils who identify as part of the LGBT+ community. As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us.

On another matter, there are reports that there has been a rise in incidents of pupils bringing prohibited items into schools in Lewisham. These items include vapes, tobacco, blades, toy guns and other items uncondusive to a positive educational experience. These are very serious matters, which could result in pupils being suspended and in extreme cases, permanently excluded. Of course, this is not something we wish for any St. Matthew Academy pupil. Parents, please can you do your best to ensure that you are vigilant and support us by speaking with your children about this at home. It is important that we keep having these conversations with our children about the risks, dangers and repercussions of making the wrong choices.

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Integrity, Courage, Service

Please could I also remind you of the uniform policy at St Matthew Academy. During the cold weather, a number of pupils have attended school wearing items, which as stated in our policy, are not permitted. These items include white socks worn over tights, coloured scarves and coats, which do not conform to our expectations. If pupils wish to wear socks with their tights, they should be black and worn under the tights. Coloured scarves should be placed in bags by the time pupils arrive at the Academy gate and all coats should be either blue or black with no branding. Unfortunately, if pupils continue to bring these items in to school, they will be confiscated.

Further to this, we have noticed that a number of pupils arrive at the Academy wearing a range of jewellery and accessories. These items, which include bracelets and earrings as well as hair beads and necklaces, are also prohibited at St Matthew Academy. The only item of jewellery that is permissible at SMA is a wristwatch, the reason for which is that teachers are not responsible for lost or damaged jewellery, neither do teachers have time to deal with issues of this nature. Please ensure that your child is appropriately dressed for school in accordance with the [SMA Uniform Policy](#).

Please could I ask you to support us in promoting healthy eating habits at St Matthew Academy. Unfortunately, pupils arriving at the Academy each morning with large quantities of unhealthy, sugary snacks is a regular occurrence. Doughnuts; 'yum-yums'; biscuits; crisps and cans of fizzy drinks with very high sugar content are often found being brought into schools by pupils. These items are not permitted because they do not adhere to our promotion of the importance of healthy eating and will therefore be confiscated. If your child brings a snack to school, please also help us by ensuring it is a healthy snack and that it is an individual portion, rather than a 'family size' portion. For information about our catering arrangements, please go to the ['Secondary Catering Information'](#) page and read about the range of foods and meal deals available through our partnership with caterers, Olive Dining.

Today pupils were issued with new ID cards to be worn on their lanyards. These new ID cards will be used by pupils to pay for their lunch instead of having their fingers scanned therefore it is imperative that pupils do not mislay these or forget to wear them to school. Pupils who do neglect to wear their new ID badges will have to wait to be served at the very end of the lunch service.

Finally I am excited to announce that on Monday 26th February pupils in the secondary phase will be treated to The Theatre for Schools Production 'Breaking the Chain.' This production is a critically acclaimed play about the devastating effects of knife crime and youth violence on the Community. The production is 55 minutes in duration and is an important part of SMA's commitment to keeping our children safe.

Yours faithfully



Ms K Migon
Director of Learning – Year 10