



December 2018

Dear Parents/Carers

As we have now begun the season of Advent and the time of preparation for Christmas I thought I would take the opportunity to write to you to highlight just some of the Outstanding Practice that I have observed in my first term as Headteacher of St Thomas More RC College.

Outstanding Practice

As your sons and daughters will have noticed I tour the school regularly and I have seen many examples of; outstanding teaching and learning, excellent behaviour and high rates of progress being made by our hardworking students.

I was fortunate to attend the very successful College Talent Show that showcased individual and collective brilliance across a range of disciplines such as music, dance and comedy. I have also witnessed sporting excellence from students across all year groups in tournaments and leagues in sports such as netball, hockey and football.

We also have had the opportunity to enhance and strengthen our Catholic mission and ethos this term through the celebration of Mass and collective worship and through the selfless charity work that many students have been involved in through the Liturgy and GIFT teams. Our Stewards team also represented our College at the Royal Horticultural Society "Green Plan" competition and were highly successful in receiving a special commendation from the judges.

High Standards: Uniform

The reputation and success of our school is built on the High Standards that we share as a community and I am extremely grateful for your ongoing support in maintaining and improving our standards, so that we can continue to deliver the best possible educational outcomes for all the students who attend St Thomas More RC College.

The students look extremely smart and ready to learn when they follow our shared core standards on uniform that include;

- a) Wearing school blazers and jumpers at all times unless permission is given to remove them. As all students are aware they are not allowed to wear hoodies/coats underneath their blazers but they are permitted to wear a coat over their blazers when they are outside the school buildings. Coats should not be worn inside the buildings.
- b) Students who are attending school appropriately do not wear make-up (including fake tan) or jewellery, apart from a watch which is of course permitted
- c) Trousers for both boys and girls should be standard school trousers. The trousers worn by students for school should never be leggings, jeans or tight fitting trousers.
- d) The uniform policy states that students wear plain black leather school shoes at St Thomas More RC College and students should not attend school in trainers.

At times an extremely small number of students choose to wear their uniform incorrectly and these situations are dealt with promptly by staff asking students to correct their uniform and then the issuing of a sanction such as a lunchtime or after school detention when appropriate.

On a few rare occasions a tiny number of students will attend school in uniform that they are not able to rectify on the day, such as the wearing of trainers rather than shoes. From January 2019 if a student attends school in incorrect uniform that cannot be easily settled, we will keep students out of class until we can contact parents/carers to resolve the situation as appropriate. The solution may include discussing with parents/carers that the student will be sent home to change into the correct uniform and then return to school as quickly as possible. *In line with Department for Education guidance this will not be counted as an exclusion from school but students who need to travel home to change into the correct uniform will be required to serve an afterschool detention.*

High Standards: Mobile Phone Policy

We do not allow mobile phones to disturb learning in lessons or to disrupt the effective running of the school, so if a mobile phone or similar device is seen or heard on school premises then it will be confiscated by a member of staff. On the first occasion a phone is confiscated in a term it can be returned to the student in question, however if a phone is confiscated on another occasion in the term, we do insist that parents or carers should collect the phone from the school office in line with our behaviour policy, as always I am grateful for your understanding in this matter.

Safe and Happy Community

Our school is an extremely happy and safe place to study and work and I am very proud to be the Headteacher of this wonderful community. Young people have many influences on their lives and I am pleased to say that the vast majority of these modern influences are very positive and affirming. I am acutely aware however that some of the pressures that are placed on young people can be less beneficial, which is why I am committed to ensuring that St Thomas More RC College is a protected and joyful community that will allow your child to safely learn and grow as an individuals and give them the opportunity to reach their full potential. In assemblies over the next few weeks, staff will highlight our ongoing commitment to high standards and the wellbeing/safety of students whilst also reinforcing that our behaviour policy has an absolute “zero tolerance” approach to offensive weapons and illegal substances ever being brought onto school premises. Students must be aware that as Headteacher I am fully prepared to use the ultimate sanction of permanent exclusion when appropriate for incidents of this serious nature if they did occur in the future.

End of Term Arrangements

As a Catholic Community we have a number of activities over the next few weeks to help prepare us for the very important festival of Christmas that celebrates the birth of Jesus. Our preparations include:

- 1) Christmas Carol Concert at St Mary’s Church – 12th December (All parents/carers are warmly invited to this event)
- 2) Christmas Dinner - Wednesday 19th December
- 3) Christmas Jumper Day - Wednesday 19th December (Students will receive further information about this event)
- 4) Senior Citizens Christmas Party – Thursday 20th December
- 5) Advent Liturgies – Friday 21st December
- 6) Advent Charity Collections for the food bank in St Mary's Parish.
- 7) Installation and decoration of the Christmas Tree in Foyer
- 8) Assemblies and Form Prayers reflecting on Advent

Early Finish Last Day of Term

As is customary on the last day of term (Friday 21st December) the school will close early following afternoon registration at 12:20. The Y79, Y80 and Y86 bus services will operate on that date for your child’s return journey home. If collecting your child by car, please do not park near or opposite the college entrance as this is a potential hazard as pupils cross the road when they leave the premises.

Pupils return to school on **Tuesday 8th January.**

Highest Performing School 2018

This term it was a great privilege to be involved in the celebration of our past students' successes at our Year 11 Leavers' Presentation evening. The event was a huge success and we were fortunate to have the Lady Mayor of Tameside in attendance to present the certificate and awards to our former pupils. The event was an opportunity to confirm that once again St Thomas More RC College was the top performing school in Tameside and across the Salford Diocese. As we end the term we have now received all the applications for school admission to Year 7 in September 2019. I am proud to say that the school continues to be very heavily oversubscribed with far more students applying than we have places for. This further highlights the demand for places in our highly successful school and parents/carers who have children who are currently attending often tell me that they feel very fortunate that their sons/daughters are benefiting from the excellent pastoral care and education that we provide. It is our commitment to provide the highest possible standards, in partnership with parents and carers, that gives all our fantastic students the opportunity to reach their full potential.

God bless you all and I hope you have a Happy and Holy Christmas.

Yours sincerely



Mr H Brophy
Headteacher