

22nd October 2014

Dear Parent/Carer,

It's hard to believe we have already completed the first half term of this academic year! So much has happened already this school year at St. Patrick's that I have to keep reminding myself it is only October.

Our new Year 7 pupils have settled in very well indeed. I can't believe how much they have already changed from the nervous little ones they were in assembly on their first day in September, to the bright, confident and chatty young people I see when I walk around school today. Our teachers are very positive about them and we are expecting great things from this year group. I hope that as parents of a Year 7 pupil you too feel your child has settled well. You have already met your child's Form Tutor. All parents are actively encouraged to contact school with issues or concerns at any time during the school year. We will always try to be supportive and understanding.

I am sure that with all the media attention we have received you will already be aware of the amazing historical results that our Year 11s achieved in summer. 81% of them achieved 5 A*-C including English and Maths; 89% achieved a grade A*-C in English and 89% a grade A*-C in Maths. Given they achieved this in a year where there appears to have been a significant national dip, these results are even more special to the school. We are so proud of our pupils; they worked very hard and deserve their rewards. There is no doubt that the parents of this year group made a significant contribution and demonstrated what can be achieved by working together.

The staff of St Patrick's are dedicated, talented and epitomise the Gospel values which underpin our work. My thanks to them for working so hard. They are delighted with the results but not complacent. Our staff are ambitious for the school and our children; they continue to find new ways of achieving more.

I have already met with the parents of our current Year 11 pupils but want to remind you of the important Pre Public Examinations which are fast approaching. It is vital that your child is working all through the half term break in order to perform their best in these important examinations. Some Year 10 pupils will also be sitting Pre Public Examinations and parents will have been informed in a separate letter.

It is essential that we do continue to expect the highest standards of behaviour, attitude and dress to maintain and even further improve standards. The standard of uniform in school at the moment is tremendous and I would like to thank parents for your continued support with this. Behaviour around the school is excellent and all students continue to benefit from a strong pastoral system which is having a positive impact on the care, guidance and support given to each child.

Mobile phones are now very sophisticated and can be used to keep young people connected, to keep them safe and to support learning. I know some parents want their child to have a phone with them during the day and therefore I do not want to ban phones from school. If you allow your child to bring a phone into school I would strongly encourage you to purchase insurance because we do not have insurance for pupil phones and can therefore not take responsibility for lost, damaged or stolen phones.

In relation to the use of phones within school, pupils will be told by teachers when phones can or cannot be used. Pupils who disobey the instructions of the teacher will have their phone confiscated. Ear phones are not allowed to be seen hanging from school uniform as pupils walk around the building – they are expected to be kept in pockets or in bags.

All students have been issued with a planner to assist with organisation and to facilitate communication between home and school. Look out for green writing, which is something to be pleased about, and red writing, which is a cause for concern. Please sign the planner weekly and, if you wish, put in a comment.

I would reiterate that effective communication between home and school is vital and encouraged. If you have concerns, let us know, in the first instance, by contacting your child's Form Teacher. Heads of House deal with more serious matters and in a minority of cases either the Assistant Headteacher (Mrs Leader) or the Deputy Headteacher (Mr Wall from January) will become involved.

May I remind parents not to ask for holiday leave in term time? The law allows me as a Headteacher to approve such leave only in very special circumstances. Attendance has a huge impact on educational performance. Thank you for your support with regard to attendance. Our attendance target this year is 95% and we see this as a minimum expectation of all pupils. We will be in touch as soon as your child's attendance drops below 95% to let you know.

Finally, thank you for your continued and much valued support. The beginning of a new academic year is an exciting time and an even more exciting time as a new Headteacher. I have loved every second of my new role so far and I look forward to working with you in the service of our students and the wider community in the future.

Yours sincerely,



Headteacher