



4<sup>th</sup> October 2016

Dear Parent(s)

Now that the term is well underway I am writing to confirm one or two important dates and to clarify some points.

The students have made a very good start to the year and the pupils in years 7-11 have adapted quickly to our new "Attitude to Learning" policy. All lessons begin with a common pattern and equipment check and there is an increased emphasis on producing neat work and taking responsibility for your own learning. Senior staff are patrolling the corridors each lesson and visiting classes to see how the pupils are getting on.

The new planners are a key component of this new system. All credits or positive comments are recorded here, as are minor negatives for lack of equipment, lack of homework, low level disruption etc. Any member of staff, or you as a parent, can look at these planners at any time and they give a very clear and up to the minute picture of how things are going for the pupil.

The uniforms are looking very smart and I am very grateful for your on-going support in this vital area. If the boys are turning up on time, smartly presented and equipped for their lesson, all the ingredients are in place for a good start. Our only remaining issues are a small minority of boys who insist upon convincing their parents to part with hard-earned cash for shoes which will not meet our requirements. Shoes should be traditional, black, "polishable" shoes with no logos, labels or colours anywhere on them. Any boy not wearing such shoes will be expected to wear a pair provided by us until they have a correct pair in place.

We also have a new assessment system, designed to be simple and easy to remember. Each pupil is given an "expected grade" to aim for in each subject. The expected grade will be the grade that they should obtain if they meet their potential at the end of year 11, in most cases this will be a number on the scale 9 – 1. In the Sixth form the expected grade will be in the range A\*-E. Each term we will report to you your son/daughter's progress towards these expected grades. In addition, staff will record a grade on the system before each half term holiday. This will not be sent to you, only the termly ones will be sent home, but they help us to inform planning and intervention for the following half term.

In order to ensure that the planning which builds upon this data is timely and effective, we will shorten the school timetable for the Thursday before each holiday so that a whole staff data and planning meeting can take place. This will involve five Thursdays in the year as there will not be a meeting the day before the summer holiday. All five lessons on those days will take place, but each one will be ten minutes shorter, allowing the school to close for pupils at 2.10 pm.

...LIFE  
IN ALL ITS  
FULLNESS

EXECUTIVE HEADTEACHER:  
Mr L D RIPPON, B.A. Hons., N.P.Q.H.  
HEAD OF SCHOOL:  
Mr G. Flowers, B.A. Hons., M.A., N.P.Q.H.  
DEPUTY HEAD (KS4):  
Rev. Bro. Peter, f.i.c., B.A. Hons.  
DEPUTY HEAD (KS3):  
Mrs K. M. Fay, B.A. Hons., N.P.Q.H.  
BUSINESS MANAGER:  
Mrs M. Black, B.A. Hons., M.A.A.T.





**ST FRANCIS  
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The Thursdays involved are

Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> October 2016

Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> December 2016

Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> February 2017

Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> April 2017

Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> May 2017

Another area you could really help with as parents is homework. My three children are now grown up but I remember well the difficulties of being a working parent and trying to keep an eye on how much study was actually taking place behind all the social media, Playstations, Xboxes etc. My own theory is that online gaming is a significant factor in the issue of boys lagging behind girls across the country when it comes to examinations. Too often boys will postpone doing work or rush it when there are more attractive things on offer. Please do whatever you can to check planners, the homework timetables on the website and to see if homework is being completed properly. I know this can be awkward, especially with older pupils, but anything you can do to help will make a difference and behind the teenage grumps they are often secretly glad of the attention. Please also notice if your children are responding to the feedback given to them by their teachers, they are told to do this in purple pen so it should be easy to see.

By putting in place the above measures, plus others to improve reading programmes, the use of the Learning Resource Centre, and the employment of extra staffing in SEN, we are confident that the pupils will make excellent progress. The fruits of this work can already be seen in the summer results, which saw a 6% increase in our progress measures at Key Stage 4, which are now roughly in line with the national results for boys and girls.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely

Mr Flowers

Head of School

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