

Thursday 7th September 2023

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope you and your family have had a lovely summer holiday. I'm writing to you today to provide you with a short update with what is happening at St Antony's in this upcoming academic year.

Results

At the end of August, we said a final goodbye to our departing Y11 pupils after they collected their GCSE grades. Our results this year were on par with what they were prior to the pandemic in 2019 which gives us a solid foundation to build on. However, I have been very clear with the staff at our recent training day that we all must continue to do more to push our pupils and raise our expectations of what they can achieve in terms of their academic outcomes. This is a key priority for us all during this coming year, especially for pupils in Year 11.

Respect

In order to ensure learning remains at the very heart of our school, we will continue to take a strong stance against any form of defiance towards adults from pupils and any form of disruption by pupils in lessons. A calm, focused, respectful climate is what we strive to provide pupils every day so they can focus on what really matters - their learning in lessons. Along with lots of love, patience and support where it is required, this may also mean that pupils will be given sanctions should their behaviour not be up to the very high standards we expect – and this may include detentions, suspensions or even permanent exclusions. We would appreciate your support in reiterating to your child the importance of following adult instructions at all times and being focused in lessons at all times so children get a clear and consistent message both at home and at school.

New staff

We have several new colleagues starting with us this year and I know your child will provide them with a very warm welcome as they get up to speed on how we do things at St Antony's. Our new starters include:

- Mr James – Assistant Headteacher for Pastoral
- Mrs Stevens – Director of Languages
- Mrs West – Lead Practitioner in Languages
- Mr Grant – Director of Computer Science
- Mrs James – Curriculum Leader in History
- Miss Quinn – Curriculum Leader in Music
- Mr Stapley – Teacher of PE and Maths
- Mrs O'Connor – Second in Science
- Mrs Deesi – Teacher of English

Attendance

A top priority for our pastoral team in this upcoming year is to ensure we maximise the attendance of pupils to school. The GCSE results from the summer reinforced a key fact – that the more pupils attend school, the better their outcomes. If a pupil has an overall attendance of 95%, this may sound good, yet it actually means the pupil will have missed nearly 2 weeks of lessons, which is nearly 50 hours of input from their class teachers that they will not get back.

In our school, the minimum attendance target for each pupil is 97%.

As has become customary, we will not authorise any term time holidays. In addition, wherever possible, we ask that medical appointments are made outside of the school day. We will be closely monitoring the attendance of all children and will aim to quickly identify patterns of absence so that support may be offered to young people and their families should this be necessary.

Behaviour and values curriculum

New for this year is the launch of our behaviour and values curriculum to provide clarity for pupils and reinforce our high expectations. This is rolling programme being led by our pastoral team that aims to teach all young people how to behave in various different situations in school and live out each of our 5 core values of love, respect, integrity, service and resilience. This support means more of our pupils can align with *"The STA Way"*, so that they avoid getting in to trouble and are becoming the best versions of themselves. Some of the themes within our behaviour and values curriculum in the early part of this year include how to conduct yourself in an assembly, what to do during a fire drill, how to queue respectfully during lunch and what you should do at the start of each lesson.

Reading and literacy support

We will continue to prioritise reading and literacy support for all pupils in the coming year. Form time reading will take place three times a week, with each year group reading the same novel. We will also be adding non-fiction reading through access to The Day online newspaper this year. The novels being read by pupils in the first half term are as follows:

Year	Novel
7	A Monster Calls
8	My Sister Lives on the Mantlepiece
9	The Life of Pi
10	The Book Thief
11	1984

For pupils who need more support with their reading, we will continue to provide bespoke phonics support via the Fresh Start programme. This had a very positive impact for many of our weakest readers in the last year academic year and we look forward to supporting pupils again so that they develop their reading and can, in turn, access more readily our taught curriculum in all their lessons.

Homework

We have a new approach to homework this year, which will involve all pupils being given booklets that contain recall questions relating to essential knowledge from their various subjects. In addition, for pupils in Years 10 and 11, there are also extra application questions to support pupils with developing their exam technique. This new approach to homework is ultimately designed to help pupils to know more and remember more of what their teachers have taught them, meaning they are more prepared for end of topic assessments and national examinations. Homework will be set on SatchelOne in the usual way and non-completion of homework will continue to be sanctioned unless a pupil has a legitimate reason.

Investing heavily in staff training

School improvement is not possible unless leaders continue to support and train all colleagues who work with children and this shall remain a key priority for school leaders at St Antony's in the year ahead. A key part of the training programme for teaching staff will involve developing their knowledge and skills, so they have a very clear understanding of what pupils do and do not yet know – lessons can then be adapted in real time to meet the needs of pupils. This will help teachers to strengthen the connection between what is taught and what is learnt by young people.

Open evening

Our annual open evening will take place on Monday 18th September and this will mean we will need to close the school early on this date in order to ensure our site is ready. Hence, pupils will be leaving at 1pm on that day after they have had lunch and received their afternoon registration mark.

Information evenings for parents / carers

Part of our commitment to engage more fully with parents and carers means we are holding year group information evenings for pupils in Y8, Y9, Y10 and Y11 so you have clarity about the year ahead for child. It will be an opportunity to come in to school, hear from various school leaders and ask questions. Refreshments will be provided. Dates of the various information evenings are outlined below. For parents and carers of pupils in Y7, lots of information was provided at the transition event last summer, but we will be inviting you into school to meet your child's form tutor towards the end of this half term so you can see how your child has settled into life at St Antony's.

Year	Date
7 (settling in evening)	Wed 10 th Oct (4pm – 6pm)
8	Wed 4 th Oct (5pm – 6pm)
9	Wed 27 th Sept (5pm – 6pm)
10	Wed 20 th Sept (5pm – 6pm)
11	Wed 13 th Sept (5pm – 6pm)

Finally, you will find attached with this letter a summary of key dates for your diary for this upcoming Autumn Term so you are fully aware of what is going on and can plan accordingly, should that be necessary.

Thank you, as always, for your ongoing support

Kind regards



Mr A Campbell

Headteacher