



**ST. MATTHEW'S**  
ROMAN CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL  
Voluntary Academy



**EMMAUS**  
CATHOLIC ACADEMY TRUST

15 February 2023

Dear Parents/Carers

In the past few weeks since the publication of our latest Ofsted report I have spoken with many parents to answer questions, discuss concerns and outline in more detail our improvement plans moving forward. These conversations have been very productive and helped guide the recent 'FAQ' document which has been very well received. The overriding feelings from these discussions are that parents and carers care very deeply about helping the school to improve and want these improvements to be as fast as possible. I would like to reassure you that we share the same aim, and we are working tirelessly to make this happen. Please see below a few highlights of recent work:

The post-Ofsted action plan has been approved by the new governing body and we are immediately putting these plans into place. The new governors have already visited the school and spoken to staff and students. Their findings will help guide their work in supporting and challenging school leaders and our decisions on a regular basis.

We have continued with our recruitment drive to find strong staff and I am pleased to announce that we have made a number of appointments including three experienced maths teachers who will join us at Easter.

An external safeguarding audit took place last week to check that our improved procedures are robust and we have a further audit booked in March. We are committed to ensuring that not only are our safeguarding systems fit for purpose, but they are the best they possibly can be.

In March we will also welcome Anne Seneviratne back to our school. Anne is a nationally-recognized expert in many aspects of education, especially curriculum content and design. She visited us last October and she will continue to work with the school over the coming months. Anne will check what our teachers teach and what our students learn in each subject area to guarantee that the subject content is appropriate, broad and balanced.

Mr Passarello and I have led all the year group assemblies and continued speaking to students about the role they can play in helping the school improve. We have spoken to students at length about the benefits of doing the simple things right every day and shared some inspirational stories of famous Mancunians. We have been incredibly impressed by the vast majority of students who continue to work hard, behave well and show good manners to staff and other students around the school building.

The current school timetable has been modified so that we will return to five 1-hour lessons per day after February half term. We will still have a two-week timetable (Week A and Week B) and students' classes and teachers will remain the same, but the length of their lessons will be reduced to one hour. The new timetable will 'go live' in Edulink on Monday 20th February (during the half term holiday) so parents and students can make sure they are prepared for the first day back, and students will be given a paper copy of their new timetable on Monday 27th February (first day of the new half term).

Another key part of our recent conversations with parents has been around unacceptable behaviour. This has also been a feature of our messaging to students via assemblies and I wish to reassure parents again that unacceptable behaviour will not be tolerated at St Matthew's. We speak to students on a daily basis about this and remind them that our three simple rules of respect: (respect your learning, respect the learning of others, respect anything an adult reasonably asks you to do) are there to ensure that our climate in both classrooms and communal spaces is safe, calm and purposeful. We have also made it clear that students who do not conform to these expectations will be dealt with firmly.

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With this in mind I want to share with all parents/carers that from Monday 27th February there will be an increased focus on students being in school and in lesson on time. We are doing this to make sure all lessons can start promptly and there is no lost learning time. The move back to 1-hour lessons makes this especially important. To help students achieve this we are installing digital clocks around the school during the half-term break. There will be synchronized digital clocks in outside areas and also internal communal areas e.g. corridors and the dining room. Students have been informed of this during assemblies this week, but please see below a clear outline of what we expect and what will happen if students do not do this.

All students must be in school for 8.25am. Form Time begins at 8.30am.

All students must be at their lesson within 5 minutes. Any student who is more than 5 minutes late to lesson will be issued with a C3 30-minute detention on the same day. Parents will be informed of this via Edulink notification.

Any student who is more than 10 minutes late to lesson will be deemed to be truanting that class. When found they will be taken to our internal exclusion room for a period of a full day. This means that if a student is taken to internal exclusion at 11am, he/she will not be allowed back to normal lessons until 11am the next day.

In the internal exclusion room students will be given work to complete in total silence. Any disruption to this will lead to a suspension from school. On their return, the student will have to complete a full day in internal exclusion before being allowed to return to normal lessons. Any refusal to attend internal exclusion will lead to the same consequence.

We know that parents and carers will support us with this. You have told us repeatedly that you want our school to have a firm line with unacceptable behaviour and this is a simple way in which school and home can work together to achieve this. I urge you to speak to your son/daughter about the importance of punctuality to school and to lessons. Please consider something we regularly share with students: if you are 5 minutes late to every lesson, this adds up to 80 hours per year and over 5 years at school this is 400 hours of lost learning, which is 16 school weeks – almost half a year. The disadvantage a student faces in their final exams compared to others if they miss half a year's education is huge and can so easily be avoided.

We know that the above will only apply to a tiny minority of students. For the rest of our students we will continue to recognise their excellent behaviour and attitudes through our reward system. Every day students can gain reward tickets for doing the right thing, whatever this may be: good manners, holding open a door, helping another student or staff member, working hard, asking good questions, completing RRR (homework) to a high standard, to name just a few examples. Each week there will be a prize draw when 3 reward tickets will be pulled out for a voucher prize.

Finally, you may be aware that a further national strike by members of the NEU teaching union is planned for Tuesday 28th February. Currently we must work on the premise that this will go ahead and if so, our arrangements will be the same as the previous strike day on 1st February. Therefore, our intention is for Year 11 students to attend school as normal and for Years 7-10 to work from home. We are monitoring the situation daily and will do so over the half term break. If there are any developments which change these arrangements we will communicate to parents/carers immediately via Edulink.

This is a very exciting time to be part of St Matthew's. The Ofsted report has certainly been a catalyst for change which can only be a positive step forward. May I thank all parents and carers for their ongoing support and wish you all a peaceful and enjoyable half term break.

Yours sincerely



Mr S Atkin  
**Deputy Headteacher**