



14 July 2023

Dear Parents/ Carers

Key information: For Parents, Students and Carers

As we approach the end of this academic year and approach the summer break, I wanted to take this opportunity to outline our expectations for the new academic year at St. Matthew's. Our aim is to achieve the highest standards across the school and have high expectations for all children, enabling them to excel in their academic and social development, achieve their potential in the final GCSE examinations, and access the next steps on their chosen pathway. Next year, we will continue to build on the success achieved during the last two terms and the information below clarifies once again some of our key priorities for September 2023:

To accomplish these goals, it is crucial that our school environment is focused on teaching and learning. This can be achieved by ensuring that each child follows our simple rules and expectations. By doing so, we create a happy, safe, and engaging place where every child can be supported in achieving their potential.

The vast majority of children meet these expectations already but it is important that I emphasise that this will be expected of all children when we return in September.

Disruption to learning

The Reflection Room system will be introduced, where students who do not comply with our classroom rules are taken if they continue to disrupt learning. Entry to this room will automatically trigger a 40-minute same day detention and students can expect a phone call home from the teacher who has exited the student from class. This will have a positive impact on the learning environment to allow time for the student to reflect on the issues in class and allow others to continue learning free from disruption.

Uniform

We have been informing both students, staff and parents for several weeks now that we are committed to improving uniform standards across the school from September. This will focus on exceptionally high standards of presentation. Students must return to school in September in their full school uniform.

From September, all students are expected to wear the full school uniform as listed below at all times:

- **Green blazer** with school badge – The green school jumpers are not to worn instead of blazers – all students must wear a blazer to school. Some students are currently wearing a coat and the green jumper instead of a blazer, however this is no longer permitted
- **White shirt or blouse** (tucked in with top button fastened- essential)
- **Black tailored school trousers** with black or grey socks or
- **Green skirt** year 11 or **tartan skirt** years 7-10 (not rolled up!) or black tailored trousers with black tights or black socks – **Socks with a frilled trim are not allowed.**
- **School tie (Plain bottle green)** to be worn with the tie pushed up to shirt collar

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Footwear

- Students are to wear plain black school shoes only (footwear must not have coloured emblems, logos, stripes or patterns)
- Students should not wear canvas shoes or trainers – only plain leather/leather look shoes (polishable)
- Outdoor Clothing
- All outdoor coats should be plain and practical for school and taken off in the school building
- No 'hoodies', tracksuit tops or sweatshirts are allowed at all in the school – at ANY time, including breaks and lunchtime and will be confiscated if worn after morning registration
- Plain black scarf, gloves/hat may be worn on the way to/from school during cold weather. No other form of mask, balaclava etc will be acceptable.

Make Up

A discreetly applied amount of make-up is acceptable in all year groups.

Jewellery

- Students are permitted to wear one pair of small studs/hoops in their ear lobe.
- No other jewellery or piercings should be worn to school.

Equipment Rationale

- School Bag – a rucksack style bag, worn across both shoulders or a satchel
- Pencil Case - This is essential to help with organisation
- Pens - Please have at least one black and one blue pen at all times
- Pencils, eraser and ruler. These are essential for producing high quality work in a number of curriculum areas.

Mobile phones and other electronic devices:

Mobile phones and electronic devices are becoming an increasing problem in school and pose a safeguarding risk to staff and students. Following consultation with staff and students, we will begin a phased approach to a zero-electronics device policy from January 2024. This will mean that phones can be used to and from school but must be switched off and out of sight once on the school grounds. As we have done with uniform standards, we will continue to educate our students about responsible use of phones and other devices.

From September 2023, students will be allowed to bring phones to school, at their own risk, but with an increased focus on being out of sight throughout the school day with the exception of break and lunchtime. This rule applies to music players, speakers and headphones. If students bring phones in to school, they should not be seen or heard during lesson time or during transitions between lessons. Phones which are taken out during lessons may be confiscated until the end of the day. Some students use phones to access their timetable using the Edulink app but this will not be necessary from September as they will be issued with a planner containing their timetable.

Energy drinks

Energy drinks are banned from school – Lucozade, PRIME and soft drinks etc. due to the fact that they are full of sugar and not healthy for students and do not help them to behave. Energy drinks of any description are banned as the research makes clear they are damaging for young people.

The school needs your support in upholding our high standards of appearance and conduct by ensuring your son/daughter adheres to the rules and expectations outlined above. Please note that any student not meeting the expectations detailed in this letter will be addressed using appropriate sanctions in line with the school's Behaviour for Learning Policy.

Attendance and Punctuality.

This remains a key requirement at all times. School begins at 8.30am for students. Once again, please encourage your son or daughter to recognise the value of having both excellent attendance and punctuality records as these attributes are essential for success now and beyond school. Several Y11 students this year did not secure their preferred College place as their attendance was below 95%. As you are aware, absence from school results in lost learning time and every period of absence really does disadvantage our students. Our school attendance target is 97% attendance as a minimum - any level of attendance that is lower than this will hinder progress. The safety of our students is always of the utmost importance and attendance in school helps us to check on the wellbeing of all in our community. Our attendance team will take a more proactive role in the community from September and help to support all families to ensure high levels of attendance.

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Thank you so much to all our families for their support during my first term at the school, it has been much appreciated. I know you will back us in our journey of school improvement and I am excited about the future and the opportunities it holds for our students. I am confident that with your support, we can provide them with an exceptional educational experience that prepares them for a lifetime of success.

Yours sincerely



Mr. A Nightingale
Headteacher