

29 April 2016

Dear Parents/Carers,

I hope you had a happy Easter and enjoyed the holidays. I would like to thank you all for ensuring your child/children's attendance remained high despite the different school holidays across the area. I know this has proved problematic for some families so I do appreciate your support.

We are rapidly approaching exam season for all year groups. I would like to ask you to support your child/children in preparing for their exams. Firstly, by ensuring they prepare by revising thoroughly. Most students underestimate how long it takes to learn their work thoroughly and you can help by encouraging them to study every evening and helping them plan their revision time. It is also best if you minimise the distractions e.g. phones, lap-tops and game consoles. They cannot focus on their work if they are constantly checking texts and Facebook. Your child/children will also need plenty of sleep and a good diet to help them maximise their performance.

The second way you can help them is to ensure they have the correct equipment for the exams, so I ask you to make sure they have restocked with black pens, pencils, a calculator and maths equipment and that they bring them to school daily.

I appreciate that exam time is very stressful for students and their families but we know from experience that the hard work will pay off and getting students into good study habits in Key Stage 3 will help with the extremely important GCSEs and A levels. I wish all our young people the best of luck and am confident that they can reach or exceed their targets.

Since I last wrote the school performance tables have been published. Yet again we are delighted with how we compare to other local schools. Our Year 11 students in 2015 once again outperformed most other schools in the district in the important measure of 5 A*-C including English and Maths and for the second consecutive year the progress our Year 11 students made placed us in the top 5% of the country.

Our A-level students have done remarkably well in 2015 and are once again in the top 3 non-selective schools in Lancashire for students achieving top grades in the most challenging subjects. Vocational performance at Level 3 is the 4th best in Lancashire with the average grade being a Distinction+. Alongside our excellent support and guidance these are key reasons why our students continuously gain their choice of university studying prestigious degree subjects.

This week Our Lady's is hosting the pilgrim statue, which has been moving around the different Catholic schools in our diocese as part of The Year of Mercy. All students will have assemblies in which we talk about God's abundant mercy and encourage our young people to show mercy to others in our community and beyond. An example of this is that the students were busy during Lent raising money for five schools in Uganda. One of the events involved Mr Bates and I taking part in a Bush-tucker Trial, an experience I am not eager to repeat! Our next fund raising event for Uganda will be a Musical evening on 6th May. Tickets are available from school or on the night. It is always an enjoyable evening and wonderful to see our students using their talents to help others. The money raised will go directly to the schools in Uganda when our group of sixth form students and staff visit in July

As I write the snow is falling so we will not change to summer uniform yet. We will let parents know by text when we will change. Summer uniform means that students do not have to wear their jumper but must continue to wear their blazer. No other coats or jackets can be worn in place of the jumper. If the weather cools they can revert to their jumpers. I have been very pleased with how the students have worn their uniform this year, they have looked very smart but I am concerned about the length of many skirts. We will be consulting on this and intend to introduce a skirt of a certain length. Girls can still wear tailored trousers if they do not want to wear the skirt.

School continues to be very busy with many extra-curricular activities, including a trip to France and the Dance trip to London. Our Digital Leaders have been championing e-safety and if you wish to find out more about their work or to get up to date internet safety advice follow them on <https://www.facebook.com/OLCC-Digital-Leaders>. If you drive past school you will have noticed our extended sports field, which has allowed us to host football matches enabling the boys to play at home for the first time. It will also be very beneficial during the athletics season. Other students are busy rehearsing for our summer show Joseph and his Technicolor Dream Coat, details for buying tickets will follow.

I am delighted that our students continue to act on Oscar Romero's idea of 'Aspire not to have more but to be more' I would also like to thank all the staff at Our Lady's who give our young people all these amazing opportunities by giving up their time and expertise. For all our recent news visit our website <http://www.olcc.lancs.sch.uk/>, you will also find us on Facebook 'Our Lady's Catholic College – The Official Site'.

It only remains for me to thank you again for your continued support and wish you and your families the best for the remainder of the academic year.

Yours sincerely,

Helen Seddon
Headteacher