

September 2016

Dear Parent/Carer,

We are delighted to welcome your son/daughter into Year 8. The year has started very positively, and students have settled into their learning productively. I have received many positive comments from Department Heads about how much effort students are putting into both class and homework, with a focused, mature attitude to their learning.

As I am sure you are already aware this year has seen fantastic, school record breaking, GCSE and A Level results at Our Lady's Catholic College and our aim is for every pupil to reach their full potential. I feel confident that we have a KS3 programme in place that can help all students to achieve above expectations. However, success very much depends upon students taking responsibility for their learning and working hard. Parents and teaching staff working together can make all the difference to students' confidence and approach to their studies and I feel sure you will want to do all you can to help.

This letter has three aims:

- Set out the basic expectations for all pupils
- Give information about your child's specific assessment calendar
- Provide information about some changes we are making in the pastoral system.

Basic expectations

There are four basic rules which we would ask all parents ensure their son/ daughter follows before they leave the house each morning. These rules will ensure pupils are in the correct frame of mind and 100% concentration can be given to their learning. These rules are:

- Pupils are attending school every day, on time. Form time is the start of the day where mentoring takes place and important information is passed on, it is imperative all pupils attend Form every day on time.
- Pupils are readily prepared for school with their school planner checked and signed (by parent/carers), with correct equipment (see school planner for definitive list) in a suitable bag (books, folders and coursework will need to be regularly transported).
- All homework has been completed to the highest possible standard. This enables teachers to put all their efforts into teaching and planning invigorating lessons, instead of chasing pupils who have failed to complete homework. Homework not being completed to an acceptable standard may mean students being placed in compulsory homework sessions.
- Pupils are dressed correctly, in full school uniform (including school blazer, jumper, tie and appropriate foot wear). Navy trousers/ skirt must be worn. Skirts must be on the knee, as advised in the June letter. Students should not be wearing make-up and jewelry in ears is restricted to one stud in the ear lobe with no other piercings permitted.

Parents who ensure the above is happening allow us to truly concentrate on pushing pupils to reach their full potential and receive from us the best set of qualifications to ensure they can access their chosen further education.

Assessment calendar

Your son/ daughter has written in their planner their target grades/levels. These are not final and definitive. They are the minimum expectation for pupils to be working at, most pupils will exceed these, and their targets will be regularly reviewed to ensure they are challenging.

Mentoring has begun in Form time; pupils have discussed and set clear targets with their Form Teacher. These targets are written in their planners and recorded on our monitoring system, to be reviewed after the first round of Year 8 monitoring, in November.

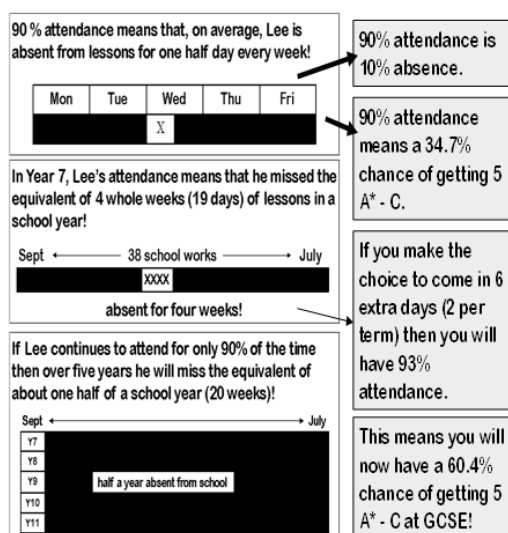
The monitoring results will be posted home in **November, February and April**, this will enable both yourself and us to track your son/ daughter's performance, and ensuring intervention is put in place where necessary. The table below shows the key assessment dates for Year 8.

Monitoring 1	14 November
Monitoring 2	6 February
Monitoring 3	4 April
Parents' Evening	23 February
Annual examination period	27 – 31 March

Changes to the pastoral system

- The government has set PA (persistent absenteeism) at 90%. This means our school expectation is that every pupil will be **no lower than 97% attendance**. Intervention has been altered accordingly. If your child slips below 95% attendance you will be informed and intervention will be put in place. This does mean the stage at which we would involve the external court officer and instigate an FPN and/or court action will obviously be higher. The image below describes how being off school for half a day a week affects attendance resulting in poor overall GCSE results. This clearly shows the absolute importance of children being in school every single day.

It's all about chance...



- As part of our focus on ensuring pupils are on time to school, attending registration time and preparing for their learning, we have a set procedure for dealing with punctuality issues. If a pupil is late to registration (prior to 9.05am) they will receive a 30 minute detention, if a pupil is late to school after registration (after 9.05am) they will receive a 60 minute detention. They will do this detention **after school on the same day** they were late to school. A text will be sent home to ensure parents know their child will be in this detention.
- We have a new rewards system, based on 'Aspire Awards' which can be given by all staff for excellence in school. These can be based on achievement, success, perseverance, involvement, responsibility and effort. We are encouraging all students to gain as many awards as possible and therefore gain their bronze, silver and gold badges.
- There are some internal changes to the behaviour policy, I have enclosed the parental guidance leaflet which shows the up to date procedures.

I hope that after reading this letter you will feel well informed about the expectations we have for Year 8 and some of the ways you can support your son/daughter. However, please do not hesitate to contact your son/daughter's form tutor or myself if you have any further questions, worries or concerns.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs. Knowles
Progress Leader (Year 8)