

September 2016

Dear Parents and Carers

Happy New Year! It has been wonderful to welcome all our students back to begin the new school year. May I extend a special welcome to Year 7s and their families who have joined our school. I am sure you will be very happy with us. A big thank you to all parents and carers for making sure the students look so smart in their uniform and have all the equipment they need to learn.

Yet again our students performed extremely well in their external exams at the end of Year 11 and Year 13. We are very proud of the hard work they put in and the progress they made. Of course they couldn't have managed this without the dedicated support and expertise of the teaching and support staff. Most of our ex Year 13 students are about to begin their university career or apprenticeships and we send them all our best wishes. We know they will do themselves, their families and their school proud.

The summer term was a very bittersweet time at Our Lady's. As a school community we were devastated by the death of Mrs Anne Galley. Her family have expressed their thanks for how the school supported them at this sad time and they were comforted by the many messages from pupils past and present. I was incredibly proud of how the students responded to help raise over £3,000 for St John's Hospice on the sponsored walk and I know more fund raising events in Mrs Galley's name are being planned.

A number of staff left school in the summer either to start retirement or move to a school closer to home. We will miss Mrs Banks, Mrs Pendlebury, Mrs Eakhurst, Mr Mangan, Miss Main, Mrs Choo Fon, Mr Dickinson, Mr Donkor and Miss Baldi. I would like to thank them all for the decades of service, dedication and love that they have given to Our Lady's and all its students.

As sad as we were to say goodbye to a number of staff in July, we are delighted to welcome a number of new staff who you will have the chance to meet during this year. Miss Ashcroft is our new Subject Leader of Technology and we are very pleased to tell you that Mrs Monaghan nee Hodkinson is now our Subject Leader of English. Mr Daghish and Mrs Hobbs have also joined the teaching staff.

It is incredibly important that the contact details and medical information we have is accurate so you will find enclosed a data sheet that I ask you check, correct and return to school as soon as possible. I appreciate that Year 7 parents will have done this fairly recently but many changes can happen over the holidays. Thanks for your patience. Please add your e-mail address and mobile phone number; this will enable you to sign up to our Schoolcomms system which will allow you to check attendance, reward and behaviour points. By downloading the free app you will also receive notifications from us. We hope you will find this a very useful service which helps you stay in touch with how your child is doing in school.

I would like to draw attention to our holiday pattern for this year. It has been on the website for many months now and you may have noticed that the October half term is later than usual. We have followed the pattern suggested by Lancashire but many other schools haven't. Please check this before booking holidays to avoid penalties. The Easter holidays also vary across the area.

In the normal course of the school day we take pictures of pupils during various events and activities. Normally both pupils and parents are delighted if their picture is chosen to appear in our media or advertising but if you do not wish us to use your child's photo, please can you drop us a line to this effect.

For more information and news about school take a look at our Facebook page and our website at olcc.lancs.sch.uk. I have also begun to tweet and the school Twitter feed is: Headteacher OLCC, @OurladysHt I hope that you will be able to follow me to see what is happening day by day at school.

To further protect our students we have locked the back gate so the only access to school is through the front door. Students can get to the front of school by the path around its perimeter. We are contacting the council re upkeep and lighting. If you wish to contact the council too or your MP it would add weight to our argument. Can I also add that if you come to collect your child by car from the front of school please do not park on the road side of the bus bay. The bus bay is for buses and they are often unable to drive through due to congestion which then causes a blockage on the main road. Thank you for your understanding in this matter.

At Our Lady's we want our pupils to "become fully alive human beings who help create a society that serves the common good". To try and inspire our young people to do this, we name the learning pathways after inspirational people. These patrons have led extraordinary Christian lives and are truly a witness to the light of the Gospel. One of them, Mother Teresa, was made a saint by Pope Francis last week. We have talked to students about this and shared one of her inspirational quotes which is displayed in the hall. "Reach high, for stars lie hidden in your soul. Dream deep, for every dream precedes the goal." We hope this inspires them this academic year and in the years ahead.

I would like to finish by thanking you for all your support over the last year, which I know you will continue in the coming year as we work together to develop our students into young adults who we are proud of and who are proud of themselves and what they have achieved. Please feel free to visit school or to contact me if there is anything you wish to discuss.

Yours sincerely



Helen Seddon
Headteacher