

Our Lady's Catholic College

Learn, live, love together in a caring Catholic community



20th July 2021

Headteacher's End of Year Letter

Dear parents and carers

We have finally made it to the end of another school year and to say it has been challenge would be an understatement. The experiences we have gone through were unprecedented but we have made it through together. As Pope Francis has said in his recent book 'Let Us Dream', "*The basic rule of a crisis is that you don't come out of it the same. If you get through it, you come out better or worse, but never the same*". We are getting through this crisis and I want to reassure you that all our staff intend Our Lady's to come out better than we were before.

COVID 19

If your child tests positive for COVID 19 during the holidays, **and has displayed symptoms within 48 hours of being in school**, can you please contact us at school, by email, at schoolclosure@olcc.lans.sch.uk Members of staff will check this email account daily and will contact pupils who have been in direct contact and advise them to self-isolate. Although the government has decided to move to 'step 4' from July 19th we are still required to isolate following a positive test result or when contacted by the 'track and trace' app. The requirement to self-isolate if you are contacted by NHS Test and Trace will remain in place until August 16th, when it will be relaxed for people who are fully vaccinated and for the under-18s. **If someone tests positive for the virus they will still be legally required to self-isolate.**

We have identified that some of the changes which we have put in place are beneficial to the smoother running of the school day and also for the behaviour of the children. Consequently, we will continue to have pupils arriving into school via separate entrance points and lining up before school and after breaks and lunches.

To try and return to more normal times we have decided to no longer have the pupils 'bubbled' into year groups in school and we will continue with daily form time. We feel children need the daily contact with the form tutor who will check pupils are set up for the day and strengthen that pastoral link.

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Headteacher
Helen Seddon BSc Hons



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Start of Term

Schools are expected to implement mass Covid testing at the start of term in order to ensure a safer return to school. In order to manage this, we will have to have a staggered start to the school year. The start times for all students is 8:40 and start dates are as follows:

- **Friday September 3rd** Year 7 and Sixth Form in school just for their test and return home.
- **Monday September 6th** Year 7 and Sixth Formers only in lessons. Years 9 and 11, testing.
- **Tuesday September 7th** Year 9 and Year 11 also in lessons and Years 8 and 10, testing.
- **Wednesday September 8th** Year 8 and 10 also in lessons.

Information about times of testing and location will be sent out closer to the time. ***As always it is your parental choice whether your child is tested.***

Masks

The government has removed the legal requirement to wear masks in schools and on public transport but are still recommending that people wear masks. For our return to school we will not insist pupils wear masks but are happy for them to continue to do so. Again, this may be subject to change based on local infection rates.

The School Day

The start of every day will continue to be slightly staggered, pupils will enter the school site as follows:

- Year 7 arrival time 08:40 through the school's main entrance
- Year 8 arrival time 08:40 through the field gate (at the back of the school)
- Year 9 arrival time 08:40 through the field gate (at the back of the school)
- Year 10 arrival time 08:40 through the MML gate (via small car park)
- Year 11 arrival time 08:40 through the gate close to the main car park
- Years 12/13 arrival time 08:50 through gate on Lune Street car park (behind the sports hall)

Staff will be on duty at each entry point to oversee arrivals and sanitising of hands.

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We are continuing with 'split lunches'. These were put in place initially to follow government guidance aiding with 'bubbling' pupils but we feel that continuing with these hours will help to avoid over-crowding and allow for the eating spaces to be cleaned between sittings.

Lunch Times

- Years 7 and 8 12:20 – 13:00
- Years 9, 10 and 11 13:20 – 14:00
- Years 12 and 13 13:20 – 14:00

From September our lunch service will expand again but **to be able to use the canteen you will need to have a parent payment SwiftPay account set up** (*unless your child is eligible for free school meals*) as the canteen will continue to be a cashless service. If you have not set up an account already and wish to do so the website link is:

<https://pg.vericool.co.uk/home/authenticate>

Please email catering@olcc.lancs.sch.uk to request your user code to set up the account. This email address will be checked intermittently during the school holidays so please be patient when waiting for a response. Pupils will have the option of a variety of hot meals and the cold sandwich counter (both selected at point of service). We will also offer an online pre-order menu for cold sandwiches/sandwich meal deals. This is to help save time at lunch as students can pre-order online and then just go and collect their 'grab bags' from the pre-order station. Due to limitations with the pre-order system we are unable to offer the full range of sandwiches but there is a good selection of popular items available.

The link to SwiftOrder is:

<https://ourladyspreorder.swift-order.co.uk/>

Again, as with SwiftPay, if your child does not already have an account please email catering@olcc.lancs.sch.uk to request a user code.

Please note that if your child does not have a SwiftOrder account they will be unable to pre-order lunch – we will no longer be allowing students to complete the paper forms in school.

All pupils will leave school at 3pm, with the exception of sixth formers who have are given permission to leave earlier if they have no lessons.

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News of our success as a school is spreading and we are now oversubscribed for our new Year 7 and have waiting lists in the other years. This is wonderful news and we look forward to welcoming our new students in September.

Our Open Evening for entry in 2021/22 is provisionally booked for Thursday 23rd September, starting at 5:30pm. However, we do have to be prepared for further restrictions being put into place so we and will also have a Virtual Open Evening online. Please let other parents, who are considering secondary schools, know about the evening. Further details will follow in September when we are certain about what we will be allowed to do.

Thank you and Goodbye

A number of staff will be leaving us at the end of this term; some to try a new career challenge, others to take up positions and promotions at new schools. They are Mr Cooper, Mr Bailey, Mrs Macgregor, Mr Bates, Miss Saltariche, Miss Hannaford, Miss Boddy, Miss Golhar, Miss Carruthers and Miss Jackson. All of these staff have contributed so much to Our Lady's over many years, we will miss them and wish them well for their futures.

Uniform

Looking forward to September, please check our uniform expectations before buying new uniform. Details of both uniform suppliers and uniform expectations are on our website www.olcc.lancs.sch.uk We are grateful for your support in ensuring pupils wear their uniform correctly. Please check that pupils are still wearing their blazers when setting off for school. We still expect pupils to wear school shoes; trainers are only for PE days or if they have a medical note. Skirts are to be knee-length and pupils will be asked to replace shorter skirts or wear trousers, which may be preferable for the colder months, if the skirt they wear is too short. This includes 'rolling up skirts' which pupils are aware is against the rules. We will accept skirts bought anywhere that are to the knee for the whole year. They do not have to be purchased in the uniform shop. The uniform has not changed to include pencil skirts. Please check on the website for full uniform expectations, including information about haircuts and piercings. We have been specific about length of skirts and hair styles. Please note that if a pupil has piercings in the nose, tongue or other part of the body, other than the lower ear lobe, they are not permitted to wear a stud or ring in them. They will be expected to remove a stud or ring during school time.

PE

Pupils will go back to changing into PE kits for their lessons, **not coming in their PE kits on PE days**. Pupils are expected to wear school PE kit for all PE lessons.

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Exam Results Days

6th Form Results Day, for A levels and VTQs is: Tuesday 10th August
GCSE and BTEC results day is: Thursday 12th August

To reiterate information previously sent out by Mr Coyle:

- Students will receive grades determined by teachers
- Students will only be assessed on what they were taught
- There will be multiple checks from schools, colleges and exam boards to ensure fairness for pupils
- Every student will have the right to appeal their grade

Contact over the holidays

We understand that throughout the year everyone has been doing all they can to cope with all of the issues brought up by the pandemic and it has been incredibly tiring and stressful for so many of you. This is also true for our school staff. They have been at higher risk than most other workers but have accepted that for the good of our pupils. They are having contact with large numbers of pupils and teaching them whilst trying to keep a distance. Other staff in their roles have supported pupils, again putting themselves at a higher risk. They have worked tirelessly to try and make sure pupils are making the progress they should and even more importantly that pupils feel happy and safe. In order for them to be rested and ready to do the same again next term it is essential that they take their summer holidays, spend it with their loved ones and relax. Therefore, staff will not be available to message, email or call you (unless it is for COVID 19 cases up until 22nd July). We will not be responding to Facebook messages either.

Please keep this letter so that you have the information you need and if you have a question check the website for an answer.

Wellbeing over the break

As we will not be in school to help you during the holidays I thought I would include some links that may help you as a parent with your child's mental health and wellbeing. We recommend you take time to try out the five ways to wellbeing during the holidays.

<https://www.mind.org.uk/workplace/mental-health-at-work/taking-care-of-yourself/five-ways-to-wellbeing/>

<https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/for-parents/parents-helpline/>

<https://www.lancashiremind.org.uk/pages/154-support-for-children-young-people>

<https://www.papyrus-uk.org/>

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To conclude I thank you all for your continued support for Our Lady's, during this very challenging year; especially when we had to come to terms with the loss of Mr Bates. It was a very difficult time for staff and students and I am incredibly proud of how our school community came together as a family and supported one another. We pride ourselves on being a family school and we could not do that without your involvement and help for all that we do to educate our young people. We have been fundraising throughout the year for a memorial garden that we are going to create. We hope this will be a very special place where pupils can learn in a unique space of calmness and beauty.

I wish you all a wonderful holiday and we look forward to seeing the students again from September 6th (dates on page 2). **This will be Week A.** We very much look forward to welcoming all of our pupils back to school. If you have any concerns, please feel free to get in touch.

Yours sincerely

Helen Seddon
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