

September 2017

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.

We are delighted to welcome our new staff who you will have the chance to meet during this year. Miss Newton is our new Subject Leader of Modern Foreign Languages, Miss Seddon, Assistant Subject Leader Science, Miss Vallente Music teacher and Mrs Winder as Vocational teacher.

This year at Our Lady's we are working on developing our students Growth Mindset. This is a scientific idea that states that intelligence is not fixed and can develop if people view learning opportunities in a positive way, welcome challenges and rather than seeing mistakes as something bad, which they must avoid, accept them and learn from them. We are banning the phrase "I can't do it" and replacing it with "I can't do it...yet"

I would encourage you to continue this work at home. The way we praise our children can have a profound impact on their mindset. Research on praise and mindsets shows that when we praise children for being clever, it promotes a fixed mindset. It sends a message that their accomplishments are innate. In contrast, praising children for working hard promotes a growth mindset. It sends a message that the child's effort is what led them to success.

The second area for development in school this year is homework. Staff are setting homework that will either help your child practise what they have learned in class or for them to learn what they have learned in class. I ask your support in helping your child organise themselves to complete their homework and meet the deadlines but not do their homework for them. With the increased volume of information to learn and the increased difficulty of GCSEs and A levels it is essential that your child gets into good habits early. Those with children in Year 11 and Sixth Form will realise that in addition to homework your child should be starting to make revision materials and learning them from early in the academic year. Unfortunately students who leave revision to the final term do not achieve the grades they are capable of. Key Stage 3 students will also benefit from reading for pleasure at home and working on their basic maths skills, for example their times tables.

From September all Catholic schools in the Lancaster Diocese have introduced a Human Relationships and Sex Education Policy. You can find this on the school website under *Communication, Policies* on the main menu. I will send more information out to you in due course about an evening to explain how and what we teach in these areas. The programme of study is broken down into growing in love for myself and God; growing in love for family, friends, faith and community; growing in love for my character and well-being. If you have any immediate questions after reading the policy please contact me.

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. Year 7 parents will have done this already. Thanks for your patience. Please add your e-mail address and mobile phone number; this will enable us to keep you informed of attendance, behaviour and homework issues. Should your child contact you during the school day with a problem please direct them to the pastoral staff, who will be available to listen to them and sort out any issues. We have had a number of incidents where parents have been unduly concerned and this has caused problems for them and staff in school. We do allow use of phones at certain points in the day but they are to be used sensibly and responsibly.

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.

I would like to draw attention to our holiday pattern for this year. Please check our website to check dates before booking holidays to avoid penalties. The Easter holidays do vary considerably across the area.

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. I would ask that you, or you child do not use the message service on Facebook for basic enquiries or out of school hours. There is a post to explain how to use it on our page.

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.

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



Headteacher