26th November 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

I am sure we are all grateful it is Friday, although the cold weather is really starting to bite so I suggest wrapping up warm this weekend!

At St Mary’s College this week we have celebrated Year 7 Reflection Day – an event which has been sorely missed in our school calendar. I visited all the year 7 forms and it was wonderful to hear them talking so enthusiastically about their pledges to save our planet, to look after our precious wildlife and the part they can each play in making a difference. With our Laudato Si focus this worked fantastically well in following Pope Francis’ view on caring for the planet that God gave us. On an aside, I think the children in Year 7 were very amused to find out that my favourite animal is a pangolin (an endangered yet very endearing species)!

On the theme of celebrations, we are all very much looking forward to being able to attend the much-loved St Mary’s College Carol Concert. There will be the opportunity for families to attend on Thursday 16th December at 7pm at the Marist Church. We are also offering all students and staff the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Advent. The world-renowned SMC pantomime will also take place for Years 7 and 8 during school time. Furthermore, we will be donning our festive jumpers to raise money for our Advent fundraising campaign—more details to follow. It is certainly an exciting time and hopefully, a Christmas which we are more accustomed to.

Regarding Covid and our safety measures, numbers in Hull are rising again. We have seen a slight increase in school and are watching this closely. I continue to liaise with Public Health England and will immediately update families if anything were to change. As always, I strongly encourage twice weekly testing and mask wearing in school where reasonable distances cannot be maintained. It is also important that students wrap up warm in the current cold snap to support our ventilation strategy. However, I do want to stress that overall attendance at St Mary’s is currently excellent, thank you for this.
After much consultation with students and reflection, we plan on bringing in a St Mary’s College school skirt. To clarify, this will only be compulsory for the new Year 7s who are starting in 2022. Students will, of course, still be able to wear mid-grey trousers and students in the other year groups can choose to wear the new skirt or their current style skirt. Bearing in mind the current uniform legislation, we are working hard with our supplier to deliver high quality, affordable items; we have reduced the number of branded items on offer. I will write regarding this in greater detail in the new term and will seek parental views.

On a separate note, you may be aware from the National news that there has been a significant rise in a number of fake social media accounts pretending to be school accounts. Unfortunately, this has happened at St Mary’s College, set up by students in the school and libellous and serious allegations have been made against staff on these platforms. Needless to say, this is utterly unacceptable and where we have identified students, we have taken swift and decisive action. The police are also assisting us in our investigations. Please can I ask that you remind your child that their behaviour online needs to be appropriate. Members of staff are human beings, they are parents, they are siblings, they are individuals who choose to work in the service of young people. Therefore, the impact of this kind of harassment and horrific behaviour can and does have permanent effects. For me, as Head of School, I have seen this first-hand and do not want any of my staff to experience this again as it has been damaging and devastating for them. Your support is greatly appreciated.

Attached to this letter you will find a parental survey which I would encourage you to complete—it should take no longer than 2 minutes and we really value your views. Also, there is an advert for Academic Tutors, if you know anyone who is an undergraduate or a graduate and is looking to work with young people this would be a great opportunity for them.

Last of all, I hope you enjoyed last week’s Issue 3 of the SMC Newsletter and that Black Friday brings you joy and savings!

God Bless,

M. Stead
Mrs M Stead

Parental survey link: https://forms.office.com/r/b77XKTnA1u