

St Mark's C of E School

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18th December 2025

Dear Parents / Carers,

Thank you all for your support this past term as we break up for the Christmas break. It has been a particularly busy and long one and certainly the students (and staff) are ready for a decent break for the festive period.

There are a few important updates I'd like to share with you, some of these are whole school notices but I will also include a few year group specific details to help you find the more relevant sections for your child(ren).

We have some new staff to announce who will be with us in the Spring. Firstly, Mrs Mary Browne who will be leading the RE team and although he has been here since November, Mr Robinson, is also working in the RE team.

With Miss Gerrard joining the Senior team in January, and Mrs Munro taking on leadership of Year 9, we also welcome Mr Ghanizade who will be teaching Science and Maths. There are a few other internal changes of tutors and lessons so students will be getting new timetables in January. The changes are not particularly widespread but it's helpful for you to be aware. Unfortunately, Mr Snell has not been well and may be off for a while, so we have a music specialist who will be taking many of his classes in the interim.

By and large the uniform this year has been excellent and we have had far fewer issues to deal with than last year. This is massively important in ensuring staff are able to spend more time working to make a difference for students, so we truly thank you for your support with this. As always when it comes to a school holiday, we know that some students may well use the time to have nails, lashes or piercings done, which of course is fine for the holidays but we ask they are back as expected when we return on 6th January. We have noticed a few girls starting to wear short tight skirts and/or tight trousers with flare style bottoms. Can I please remind parents that these are not accepted as our school uniform. In every year group we have seen lots of great progress, but a special mention to Year 9 who have really settled and shown great signs of maturing. This bodes really well for their big GCSE option choices next year.

This term we launched a new element of our St Marks reward system, which is centred around recognising students who show all of our school values through their work, actions and behaviours. This system is intended to track their merits in each category of Love, Service and Belonging over time with the school recognising major thresholds during their time with us, building up to a Gold award.

A reminder also that next year we will begin the planning for several trips, including to Ypres as part of

the WW1 and 2 remembrances, to Iceland for geography, Berlin for History and a ski trip. These are all in the pipeline for 2027 or 2028, as well as another trip to Spain. There will be a range of more local trips, but it is important to put these on the radar for parents as they can be quite expensive.

Finally, I am delighted to say that we have now been accredited as an examination centre which means we can offer students in Y10 an opportunity to sit GCSEs in their home languages either this summer or the year after. Many Y10 parents who were interested in this have already mentioned it to me last year. However, if your child wishes to take this forward, they must be able to write in their home language, as well as they can in English. The costs for entries will unfortunately be for parents to pay and we will also need to find a native speaker of that subject for the speaking exam. This can't be a family member. If you would like your child to sit a GCSE in a home language please email the office with your **details by the end of January**.

Year Group Specific news

Year 7

- Change of tutor for 7G. Mrs Browne will be taking over as the form tutor for 7G in January
- Year 7 reports will be issued on 19th December and we have parents evening on January 21st (3pm -6.30pm)
- There is a workshop with the University for a small group of Y7s on 14th January. Those involved will be sent details

Year 8

- Year 8 Reports will be coming home on 9th January.
- There is a workshop with the University for a small group of Y8s on 13th January. Those involved will be sent details.
- We are entering a competition called mock Magistrates, run by Mr Balfour. He will be in contact if it affects your child.

Year 9

- There is a careers information evening for parents on 15th January at 5.30pm
- The maths intermediate challenge for Y9 and 10 is on 28th January
- The Year 9 Options booklets will be coming home on 6th February.
- The Options parents evening is on 4th March (3.00 -6.30pm)

Year 10

- The maths intermediate challenge for Y9 and 10 is on 28th January
- Details about the Y10 work experience week in June, will be shared with parents soon. If you know of an organisation that may be able to offer a student a placement, even if it's a family business, please let me know as soon as possible.

Have a lovely Christmas.

Ben Godber
Head of Secondary