

27th November 2023

Dear Parents and Carers,

We have had a very busy and productive start to this half term. During the first week back 39 students travelled with staff to Poland. Students visited places which hold historical and geographical significance, most notably a visit to Auschwitz. This experience will stay with students beyond their time with us at St Thomas More. I would like to publicly thank the students for their exceptional conduct whilst representing the school, and secondly the staff team who worked tirelessly to plan the trip as well as giving up their own time to ensure that students were able to experience a trip with such cultural, social and educational enrichment.

The ManActCo theatre group were in school last week to give our GCSE English students a live performance of 'A Christmas Carol'. This was followed by the opportunity to question the actors and the characters themselves.

### Attendance

Here at St Thomas More we are passionate about attendance. We recognise the clear correlation between being in school attending lessons and successful outcomes. Schools are instructed by the DofE to monitor children's attendance once it is below 95%. This is stated in our attendance policy which was sent home in the first week of term and can be found on our website. At this point in the academic year, each day equates to 2.63% so only 2 days off takes a student below 95%. However, by the end of the school year each day is worth less than 0.5%. We are advised to monitor attendance after 6 weeks, but we have held off until week 8 to make it more realistic for our families. We understand that children get poorly and will need time off if they are unwell.

### Upcoming Academy events

To further promote our attendance success, we will be running 'The 12 days of Christmas' attendance reward initiative. All students who achieve 100 % for the last 12 days before the 22<sup>nd</sup> December will be entered into a raffle with prizes supplied by friends of the school and within our local community. This is a competition students will want to be in! We will share prizes and suppliers via our social media channels in the run up to the event. Watch this space for very exciting announcements.

The Expressive Arts Christmas Showcase will take place on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> December. Please save the date and ensure that you support our musicians and performers as they showcase the high calibre of talent that St Thomas More has to offer.

### Reverse advent calendar:

In school we will be running our reverse advent calendar. During the month of December, we will be asking staff and students to donate what they can to support our local foodbanks. Donations to be placed in main reception. We will also collect new, unwanted gifts. Please do not send unwanted clothes.

A reminder to all parents and carers that during this half term the whole school will focus on **5 golden rules**. These basic expectations are not new, simply these things will be the focus for the next 7 weeks. If students get the basics correct this allows everything else to follow.

#### **1: Line up orderly outside their classroom.**

Provides an orderly and calm start to the lesson. Staff will meet and greet students at the door.



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St Thomas More Catholic Voluntary Academy  
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## **2. No coats inside the building.**

All outerwear should be removed as students enter the school building; not once students get to lessons.

## **3. High standards of uniform.**

All students are part of our St Thomas More community, and we want students to wear their uniform with pride and showcase our school in the community. The vast majority of students look exceptionally smart every day. When students have a uniform issue a note/ sticker will be placed in their planner to show all teachers. In previous correspondence I have referred to our uniform policy and outlined that the school skirt should not be too tight, too short or made of Lycra.

## **4. Planner and pencil case are placed on the desk in all lessons.**

Planner and pencil case should be placed on tables for all lessons, allowing students to use the red, amber, green teaching aids, and allows staff to add notes and check the recording of home learning in the planner.

## **5. Toilets are only to be used during lessons in an emergency.**

My priorities are to protect learning time, halt the small amount of internal truancy, ensure that the toilets are well maintained and are a place where all feel safe.

To ensure the above, the toilets will be locked during lesson times. Toilets will be unlocked during all social times. Students are still able to use the toilets.

- If a student NEEDS the toilet during a lesson, they should ask their teacher.
- The staff member will record a note in their student planner.
- The student will then collect the key from student reception.

Any students who require a toilet/ medical pass must ensure that they are using this pass. If a new pass is required, please visit Learning Support to obtain a toilet pass. These measures will allow us to oversee toilet usage and maximise learning time.

## **Year 11 standards and expectations**

This half term SLT and the extended leadership of the school held a Year 11 spotlight week. Lessons were visited, and students were spoken to about learning and behaviour. Subject leaders from core subjects met to look at findings. There were many positives and areas which needed attention.

- Most students were well behaved and engaged in learning.
- School leaders felt that a standard assessment in English would provide a clear picture of student performance. An English language assessment has been carried out and will support accurate intervention sessions.
- The mock exams will take place in January (**Week commencing 27<sup>th</sup> Jan**). To prepare students for both the mocks and the 'real' thing. Revision masterclasses will be held on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> December. A parent support evening will also take place on 17<sup>th</sup> January at 6.30pm. This evening will provide parents with key information around exams, along with tools and strategies to support your child during revision.





**St. Thomas More**

CATHOLIC VOLUNTARY ACADEMY

St. Thomas More Catholic Voluntary Academy, Palace Fields, Buxton, Derbyshire, SK17 6AF Headteacher: Mr D Redfern

Finally, I am delighted to confirm that our Headteacher Mr Redfern has begun his phased return and is working closely with myself to ensure that our journey to good is rapid.

I thank parents and carers for your ongoing support.

Mrs Sarah Lancett  
Acting Head of School



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