

16th May 2025

Dear Families

It has been quite a week here at St Paul's and the events we have encountered have only served to remind us all of what a strong and cohesive community we really are. On Monday morning I was informed about the death of Daniel Flanagan, our beloved Maths teacher who was also a former student at St Paul's. Daniel died suddenly on Sunday afternoon whilst walking around Lake Windermere for charity. Telling staff and Daniel's tutor group the news was probably one of the hardest things I have done as a Headteacher. Our whole community has been grieving and supporting each other all week and I am proud of every single person for the way they have come together and supported each other during this time. Staff joined together for a Liturgy for Daniel on Tuesday afternoon, and it was a wonderful way to be together and share in our grief. I am very grateful to all the many parents who have sent in messages of condolence and support and I know that you share in our grief. We are incredibly fortunate to have such parents who join with us in times of need. All messages will be collected into a book of condolences and memories which we will share with Daniel's family in due course but for now I thank you for being there for us all.

About 15 minutes after I had met with and prayed with Daniel's tutor group, I got the call from OFSTED to say that we were going to be visited on Tuesday and Wednesday of this week. I was given the option to defer the inspection in the circumstances but after much soul searching and discussion, I decided to proceed. We were ready for the inspection, and we wanted to go on. The inspection team were incredibly compassionate and agreed to not visit the Maths department or anyone else who was close to Daniel. I am delighted to tell you that the inspection went incredibly well. It was a Section 8 inspection which means that it is ungraded. I won't be able to share the very short report with you until it is published in 30 school days' time. However, I was delighted by the feedback and the Inspectors asked me to thank all children for being incredible. This is what I experienced too. Inspectors saw absolutely no poor behaviour at all during the entire two days and were so impressed by our children. As parents, you should be incredibly proud of your children. I would also like to thank you for your support. The inspector read me some of the comments from the parent survey and I was blown away by your support and positivity about our school. This was overwhelmingly the case. I am proud to serve our community as Headteacher.

Much of everything else that has been going on has been a bit of a blur this week! I hope Year 8 parents found the opportunity to meet their child's mentor in virtual meetings very helpful. Year 8 Days of Recollection have continued this week too. Today the Drama department took a group of pupils to see the Welsh National Opera at MK Theatre. And Year 13 study leave begins today. We will then well for their exams.

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Last Friday, three Year 13s Charlotte Brewer, Ester Martinkova and Lia Zaree Gabriel attended the prestigious Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award Celebrations at Buckingham Palace. This remarkable achievement reflects more than a year of dedication, perseverance, and personal growth. Congratulations to them for achieving this award, it has taken a tremendous amount of hard work.

Next week begins with a Silver Duke of Edinburgh expedition to the Dunstable Downs from Monday to Wednesday. On Monday our RE team are taking students to St Thomas More School in Bedford for a Pilgrims of Hope conference for the Jubilee year. On Tuesday our pupils will be supporting at the St Thomas Aquinas Sports Day, and again at Bishop Parker's on Thursday. On Wednesday we are holding a Careers Fair for Year 10 and Year 10 and 12 Drama students are going to see An Inspector Calls at MK Theatre. Year 10 Geographers are off out on Geography fieldwork on Wednesday and Thursday. Also, on Thursday Years 7 to 9 pupils are off to Trent Bridge to the Test Match. Also that day, Year 10 English students are off to MK theatre to see An Inspector Calls. That night is our second Year 8 Mentoring evening.

'Knife Crime Awareness Week' takes place next week and as part of this initiative, our school's officer will be coming into school on Monday to talk to our pupils. They will be available at all lunchtimes with an information stand, providing support and a chance for all pupils to ask questions.

On Wednesday we are celebrating National Numeracy Day, and to celebrate the day, our Year 7 and Year 8 pupils have been enrolled in a Number Heroes Competition. This is a fun drawing challenge showing how numbers are used in jobs and hobbies. Students will have until 10<sup>th</sup> June to submit their entries to Miss Apostu via ClassCharts and have the opportunity to win vouchers for themselves, with the school having the chance to win a prize bundle. Please encourage your children to take part.

It will soon be half term, and it is much needed!

Have a lovely weekend.

Yours sincerely



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