



St Robert of Newminster Catholic School and Sixth Form College

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Head Teacher: Mr D Juric
Chair of Governors: Miss A Nichols

Pastoral Update

14th April 2023

Dear Parent/ Carer

House Teams and Achievements

There have been some changes to the Pastoral Teams. If parents/ carers wish to contact their child's Head of House /Assistant Head of House, please see the table below. Please remember that this is the initial route for enquiries relating to your son or daughter. We always encourage open and polite communication between home and school.

House	Head of House	Assistant Head of House
St Aidan Lindisfarne	Mrs Duncan	Mr Watson
St Cuthbert Durham	Mr Hurst	Mrs Williams
St Godric Finchale	Mrs Mansueto	Mr Hall
St Hilda Whitby	Mr Thompson	Miss Cairns

The House currently leading the way in achievement points is St Cuthbert Durham with over 9000 points followed closely by St Hilda Whitby. This is an excellent achievement so far, but we are sure the other Heads of House and their students will show a renewed determination to ensure that their Houses catch them up in the final term. We encourage all parents and carers to continue to ask their children to work hard to gain as many achievement points as they can for themselves and their respective Houses. Parents and carers can monitor achievement and behaviour point scores by regularly checking their child's planner. As we move to a new information management system next school year, it should be possible to do this electronically.

Students continue to excel in many different ways, ranging from gaining Gold Standard awards to acting in the Shakespeare for Schools Festival recently, or playing for the vast number of sports teams in school to a very high standard. These achievements are regularly acknowledged by the Pastoral Team in school.

Attendance

Overall, school attendance is good, and is well above both local and national rates. We thank you for your part in ensuring that your children are regularly in school and learning. With your sustained support, we hope to improve these figures even further. Please continue to remember that the slightest sniffle is not necessarily reason enough for your child to be absent and do send them into school whenever possible.

Please note that if your child is absent from school, you must contact the attendance team by telephone, **not text**, by 9am on the first day of absence and then every subsequent day they are off school. A note explaining the absence is also required on their return to school and must be handed to their tutor.



Punctuality to school

Although we are very happy with the overall attendance rate of students, punctuality is an area where some students do need to improve.

The vast majority of students at St Robert's are always on time for school and their lessons.

However, there is an increasing minority of students who are late for one, the other, or both. We ask for parents/carers to support us in ensuring their child is punctual to school and to stress the need for them to be punctual to lessons.

Please note the following:

The school day begins at 8:45am, when the first bell rings. Students must be in their tutor room by 8:50am prompt. Any student arriving to school after 8:50am must sign the late book.

Student Office will send a text message to parents on the day to inform them that their child was late for school (this does not apply to late school buses or extenuating circumstances where parents have informed us of an issue.)

If a student is late on a second occasion in the same week, they will be sanctioned. If students fail to complete the sanction, this will be escalated accordingly. Persistent punctuality issues will lead to parental meetings with Heads of House/Leadership Team.

Please also join us in reminding students that they should go to the toilet before school, at break, or during lunch (one full hour.) This provides ample opportunity for students, other than those with a genuine medical need who are equipped with a pass, to access the toilet outside of lesson time. While we acknowledge there will always be the very occasional exception when someone genuinely does need the toilet outside of these times, we do have a small number of students who are taking advantage of the situation by repeatedly requesting to go to the toilet during lesson time, when they have no ongoing condition which would make this necessary. This practice can disturb their learning and the learning of others. Please remind your child of this arrangement, which the majority of students abide by without problem.

Transport

As you will be aware, with two large secondary schools so close together, the roads around the school site can become very congested, as can the school car park and drop off point. To try to ease congestion locally and to help environmentally, we ask you again to consider whether there may be alternatives to dropping your child off at school by car every day, especially now that we should be coming into nicer weather.

Following the Easter break, if your child can walk or cycle safely to school, then we would ask that they consider doing so whenever possible. If you are dropping your child by car and you can drop them close to school to walk the final leg safely, this would also greatly ease the flow of traffic.

If you are dropping your child off, please ensure it is in enough time for them to be in the building by 8:40am.

Uniform

We are extremely proud of our uniform and expect all pupils to adhere to our standards. The school has very clear rules and expectations regarding uniform and equipment. We would rather the term starts in a positive manner, and we ask for the support of parents and carers with the issues mentioned below.

Ties – Last term, some students lost their tie and came to school without one. Please can all parents/ carers ensure that their child returns to school wearing a tie, where this forms part of their uniform.



Skirts - If your child wears the school skirt, it must be knee length. Please ensure your child has an appropriate length skirt. The two options are either a knee length skirt, or black school trousers.

Piercings – These are not permitted for school, regardless of the time period of ‘new’ piercings. Your child will be instructed to remove piercings. Please ensure that any recent piercings are removed before the return to school.

Footwear - Please ensure your child is wearing a smart formal shoe, with no visible branding. For example, we do not allow girls to wear ‘Vivienne Westwood’ shoes and students should not wear trainers. (KS3 students are permitted to wear trainers on the days they have PE.)

Sensible hairstyles – These are at the discretion of the Senior Assistant Head Teacher/Assistant Head Teacher. There should be no fashion accessories, no tramlines, steps, Mohicans, or outlandish colours.

Vaping

Cigarettes fortunately appear to be out of fashion with young people. However, all schools across the country are aware that in the case of some young people this habit has been replaced by vaping. We should like to make it clear that under no circumstances whatsoever are vapes permitted in school. Should students bring them into school, they will be confiscated, and the student will be sanctioned. This sanction may, depending on the situation, include suspension from school.

Industrial Action

As you will no doubt be aware, the NEU has voted for two further days of strike action this term. **These days will be Thursday 27th April and Tuesday 2nd May**. The NEU has stated that it will ensure Year 11 and Year 13 students have a full programme of education on strike days. When we have further information on exactly what that means, we will communicate this to parents. However, parents should expect some disruption for certain year groups on both these days, including possible partial closure of the school. We will write to you again with further information next week.

Examinations

We finish this letter with words of encouragement and reminders for those students who are coming up to public examinations this summer, predominantly Year 11 and Year 13.

As ever, attendance every day, at all lessons, is vital in the run up to the exams. Teachers will be finishing off any remaining subject content and preparing students for the exams this term through revision activities and past paper practice. Students should give this work their full focus. However, this must be complemented by revision at home. We ask you to encourage and support your son or daughter by ensuring that they are engaged in focussed revision at home from this point. Students are given guidance on what to revise and how to revise by their teachers. However, if your son or daughter claims not to know what to revise, please contact their Head of House/ Head of Year in the Sixth Form, who will seek further guidance for you.

Good luck to all Year 11 and Year 13 students embarking on this busy period and please do work hard.

Yours faithfully

Mr A McHale
Senior Assistant Headteacher: Pastoral

Mr D Juric
Head Teacher

