

Dear Parents and friends of our college welcome to Blessed Edward Oldcorne Catholic College I hope and trust that I will be able to convey to you over the next ten minutes the ethos of our college and share with you what we as a school value and stand for.

As a parent of two secondary aged daughters I know only too well the importance of choosing the right secondary school for your child. Both my daughters attend Blessed Edward Oldcorne Catholic College and we chose this school because its values aligned with our family values and beliefs. We want parents who actively choose us as the school for their child. Who choose us because they buy into what we stand for. We want parents who Choose us to believe that success comes about through hard work.

Schools will often blind you with statistics and figures to try and prove their success. Here at Blessed Edward we keep things simple. Our unique selling point is that we educate the mind, body and soul of each child in our college i.e. we educate the whole person. We are a proud vibrant Catholic community, but we are an inclusive community which welcomes people of all faiths and people of no particular faith. Our student population is 50% Catholic and we have 100% buy in to the ethos of our college.

Through all the changes that I have witnessed in my teaching career the phrase that has endured more than any other is "in loco parentis". For a number of hours each day we stand in the place of parents in order to widen and enrich the sense of family belonging each child experience. This is not to sentimentalise the work we do. Families strive to sustain themselves economically. They discipline, they sanction. Families can be messy places, sadly sometimes school is the best and most stable home some of our students ever have. Families can be noisy places, sometimes they demand silence, have high expectations and at their best families look out for each other ensuring all succeed in whatever they do, valuing all equally.

In this sense the idea of school has always been that all students are home schooled in that a school should function as a kind of home from home. Schools are large places where many families are gathered and that is why we say that it takes a village to raise a child – not a business or factory because these are not places where children are nurtured. In these uncertain times when talk is so often of division with countries divorcing their neighbours and others building walls both in reality and metaphorically schools have become even more important.

A good school is able to resist these external pressures and model the kind of society we want our children to go out and create in the future. We want society to flourish and we want our students to play their part in making the world a better place.

Here at Blessed Edward Oldcorne Catholic College we do this by working in partnership with our parents to help our students grow as people of good character.

These people of good character can then go out into the world and play their part in making it a better place.

At Blessed Edward Oldcorne Catholic College our virtues describe a person of good character. This image represents anyone who comes into our community and our virtues describe how we want them to be. In our college these virtues are normal.

It is normal for our young people to be loving, prayerful, hopeful. These are our religious virtues.

It is normal for our students to be kind, respectful, honest. These are our moral virtues and also our school rules.

It is normal for our students to be grateful, just, giving. These are our moral virtues; Here at Blessed Edwards we look out for those less fortunate than ourselves.

Finally, our intellectual virtues – knowledgeable, curious and resilient. Our students will experience Shakespeare, History and broaden their horizons through the study of Geography, Languages and the Arts, They will study science and learn to question and debate. Our students study the best of whatever has been thought and said. It is their birth right to be taught these things and to be proud of them.

I believe this clearly articulated description of how we want our young people to be is very powerful, relevant and unique. I do not know of another school which can articulate so clearly how to be a person of good character and the impact that will have on society.

Teaching is all about relationships. No one remembers a worksheet a teacher may have given us, but we all remember how the best teachers made us feel. Blessed Edward Oldcorne Catholic College is a calm, orderly, purposeful and respectful environment. This is the fundamental starting point for ensuring student and staff wellbeing.

We have a full-time counsellor and have had for over 15 years. We placed an emphasis on the mental health of our students long before other schools recognised its importance. Many of our staff are trained mental health first aiders and are aware of how trauma can affect young people. In today's world the ability to grow and sustain the mental health and resilience of our young people is so important.

Your child will experience a wide and varied programme of extra-curricular activities. We run an annual pilgrimage to Rome and Lourdes, cultural exchange trips to France and Germany, sports tour to Barbados, ski trips and are currently planning an expedition to Tanzania.

We are fortunate to be blessed with excellent sporting facilities here at Blessed Edward's and also committed and highly skilled P.E. staff. We may not have a sports centre on site or an all-weather running track, but I want to dispel a few myths by sharing some facts with you.

As a college we enter more sports partnership competitions than any other school in the city. Approximately 450-500 students represent at least one of our many college sports teams – nearly half the students in college.

300 students attend a least one of our extra-curricular clubs each week.

Over 250 students participate as sports leaders at our feeder primary school sports festival each year.

We are successful. On average we win 75% of our sports fixtures each year. In short, we are the most successful sporting school in the city.

When we distil it down, I believe there are 3 things we want for our children in terms of their school life. We want our children to be happy, to be safe and to be successful

We want them to be successful having done the very best they can. For some children a clutch of grade 8s and 9s will be success. For others it might be five grade 4s. For some it might even be simply navigating their way through school and getting to the end of Year 11. We never know what life will throw at us. Here at Blessed Edwards we value everyone's achievements.

Be careful when comparing our school with another. Do they place the same emphasis that we place on educating the whole child?

We don't play league table games. We ensure our children study high quality subjects to GCSE level which equip them for the next stage of their academic journey. Our academic

success is based on a broad and well thought out curriculum, Teachers have worked hard over a number of years to make the journey from Year 7 to Year 11 a well-structured and coherent learning experience.

Students study a core of R.E., English, Maths and Science as well as P.E. and personal development.

In Year 9 our students choose from a wide range of Option subjects such as Photography, Graphics, Music, Performing Arts, Creative Arts, Triple Science and Business sports science as well as traditional subjects such as History, Geography and three languages. We are unique in that we offer French Spanish and German at GCSE. Many schools only offer one language at GCSE

We are proud of our curriculum and I would urge you to look at the curriculum section of our college website for further information.

I would also urge you to look at our transition section which contains a wide variety of information on what your child could experience in Year 7 if you choose to send them to our college.

In summary a child who comes to our school will leave with a keen sense of themselves and their place in the world – they will do well in their GCSE's too.

In conclusion I would like to summarise why I believe Blessed Edward Oldcorne Catholic College is a special place to learn and grow as a young person .

You know why I love our school? Every single one of us comes to work every day to do something we love. We get to inspire children to do the things that inspire them. Our job is the most wonderful job in the world. In fact, the best part is trying to figure out all the different ways we can inspire your children. We recognise the importance of relationships and we set out to build these with each other, with our students and with parents. The best part is we do really well. Our students are very successful.

We are a warm, small, caring and vibrant community which comes together every day to do something good.

Thank you for taking the time to watch and listen to this presentation. I sincerely hope that it has given you a sense of what we as a school value and are proud of.

Please contact us at the college if you have any further questions related to any aspect of admissions into year 7 transition or the college in general.