

January 2026

Dear Parents

May I first take this opportunity to wish you a Happy New Year and I hope that you and your family had a restful Christmas break. I look forward to welcoming the Year 9 students back in college, ready to resume the focus that they showed in the Autumn Term.

This term sees Year 9 students making their first big academic decision in choosing their options for GCSE. Year 9 Parents' Evening is an important opportunity to hear about your child's academic progress, and I hope that you have been able to secure appointments in preparation for this. January also sees our second PDE day of the year and Year 9 students have already signed up to 'taster' sessions for GCSE subjects to gain an insight into possible GCSE courses that they may wish to study. This is a worthwhile experience, and I hope to see the students taking full advantage of it. Following on from this will be our Pathways Evening, where you will receive further information about the options system and a chance to discuss the GCSE courses with teachers in college. Further information about this event will be released shortly.

The Spring Term also sees the beginning of Lent, and I look forward to seeing our Year 9 students getting involved with Lenten activities, helping to raise money for causes that are supported by our college every year. It was great to see so many students involved in the end of term reward event last term and I hope that there will be even more students at reward events later this term. I also hope to see students continuing to support House events as every activity contributes and there will be lots to get involved with!

I'm sure you will agree that it is vitally important that our Year 9 students maximise every learning opportunity and excellent attendance is an important aspect of this. If your child is unable to attend college for any reason, please use the Synergy Parent app to notify us as soon as possible.

It is always a pleasure to see the Year 9 students dressed smartly and well prepared for their learning at college. A reminder that if you have had difficulty obtaining any items of uniform over the Christmas holiday, please inform me as soon as possible and we will see what we can do to help. If you have any queries regarding uniform, the policy is on the Parents section of the website.

A reminder also that if your child brings a mobile phone to college for use before or after school, it is their responsibility to ensure that it is switched off and out of sight on school grounds during the school day. I would also remind you that smartwatches are not permitted in college under any circumstances. I also ask that, if your child uses social media, please ensure that you are mindful of age restrictions for the platforms, and that you regularly monitor the content of their interactions. This will help you to head off any problems that may potentially spill over into school life and detract from your child's studies.

Please continue to contact form tutors initially regarding queries or concerns about your son or daughter, as they play a vital day to day role in the pastoral care of your child. Our primary method of communication is via the Synergy Parent App.

Important dates for your diary:

Tuesday 13th January – Year 9 Parents' Evening online 4.00pm - 7.30pm
Thursday 15th January – PDE Day
Wednesday 21st January – Curriculum Planning afternoon, students leave at 1.35pm
Friday 23rd January – Blessed Edward Oldcorne Feast Day Masses
Wednesday 28th January – Year 9 DTP and meningitis vaccinations
Thursday 29th January – Year 9 Pathways Evening
Wednesday 4th - Friday 6th February – College Production of Matilda Jr, further details to follow
Friday 13th February – students finish for February half term at 3.20pm

Finally, we believe communication is the key to building good relationships between school and home and are always keen to meet with parents to resolve matters face to face. We fully understand that urgent issues can arise but please bear in mind that we often cannot see parents who arrive without notice during the school day, because staff are teaching or in pre-arranged meetings. Please call ahead to arrange a mutually convenient time to meet, rather than arrive at school unannounced and risk disappointment if no one is available. Many thanks for your understanding on this matter and thank you for your continued support.

Mr K Dobson

Head of Year 9