



18 October 2023

Dear Parent / Carer,

I wanted to drop you a note before the half term to keep you updated with all that we have been doing since we returned in September.

Students returned from the summer break very positively. We were delighted to see them because a) we had missed them and b) we were looking forward to sharing with them the success of our outgoing year groups in year 11 and 13.

Given the disruption of COVID and the government's plans to return grade boundaries to pre COVID levels, we were delighted with the results of our students. We await the final figures to be confirmed but I can say that we outperformed all our key performance measures from 2019 at both GCSE and A level and that 89% of our students who left year 13 were placed at their first-choice university bucking the national trend. Whilst we are proud of our students' achievements, we know that it would not have been achieved without the hard work of our staff and the unwavering support of our parents and families. Both results days were a pleasure of which to be a part as was the sense of joy always tangible at St Bernard's. Once our results are confirmed, we will of course share on our website.

We started the new academic year committing ourselves once more to our faith community with both staff and students participating in staff and year group Masses. We are grateful to Fr. Paul Fox for leading our school community in these Masses and blessing our school year. These were our opportunity to give thanks for our time spent with loved ones during the summer break and the safe return of all to the school including our newest family members in year 7 and year 12.

The Harvest Mass led in conjunction with our Year 7 was a fitting demonstration of how quickly our year 7 have settled in, have become part of the Christian action that is central to the school and how well prepared they are to take on leadership roles in a very short space of time; Fr Paul commissioning a number of girls within the Mass as readers and servers.

Students have settled well to our routines and expectations. As you know, we are a highly disciplined school in order to be a happy and healthy school. Please see our behaviour policy attached to this letter. I would recommend that you go through this with your child to ensure that they are clear about the responsibilities as part of the school community and upholding our values and ethos.

On a very different note, I wanted to draw your attention to a particular group of people connected with the school who I wish to mention. Our PTFA started last year and they have, for a group of busy working parents, already managed to have success last year. They have supported at school events and managed to run a quiz night last academic year for students, their families and staff and governors. They have also donated books to the library and have supported school projects. Should you wish to get involved, please do contact them on stbernardsptfa@gmail.com.

This term, students have been outstanding in their charitable endeavours and as a school community, we have raised the following:

- A total of £1246.00 for CAFOD (£571.00 in donations and £675.00 on the soup and roll day)

- A total of £840 for the Year 11 Leadership conference (£600 from non-uniform day and £240 in donations)
- International Day of the Girl - £330

These are all in addition to our dry food parcels which were distributed after our Harvest Mass and shared between Southend Foodbank and HARP. I am always astounded, particularly during the cost-of-living crisis how generous our school community continues to be.

Today, we have had a day of prayer, fasting and abstinence so that peace may come to all at war in the world. We pray for peaceful resolutions in Israel, Gaza and Ukraine. We hope you will spare some time this week to add your prayers to ours.

This half term, we launched a range of additional programmes to support our students and continue to raise aspirations including our Sixth Form Scholars' programme and our Reading Scholars' programme. You will see more information about them on our social media in the coming weeks.

On the 30 November we will be able to show our school and local community what is on offer in the sixth form at our sixth form open evening. We are already excited about welcoming students in September 2024!

Reminders

We are pleased that our social media is up and running as a way of giving you a peek into just some of our faith life and the experiential learning that takes place both in and outside of the classroom. If you haven't followed us, a reminder of our social media platforms are below:

- St. Bernard's High School | Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/StBernardsHS/>)
- St. Bernard's Catholic High School | LinkedIn (<https://www.linkedin.com/company/st-bernard-s-catholic-high-school/>)
- St. Bernard's HS Westcliff (@stbernardshs) • Instagram photos and videos (<https://www.instagram.com/stbernardshs/>)
- St. Bernard's High School | Twitter (https://twitter.com/StBernards_HS)

We continue to thank you for your support. We will shortly be having parental governor elections so more information to follow.

If you have any particular skills or ways in which you feel you could support the school, please do let us know. Please email office@stbernards.southend.sch.uk.

Should you have any worries or concerns about your child, please contact their form tutor or Head of Year in the first instance. All safeguarding matters should go directly to Mrs Barnes. Should you wish to contact me, please do not use your child's school email information to contact me directly but through the appropriate channel: head@stbernards.southend.sch.uk. Should you wish to meet with me, please arrange to do so through my PA, Mrs Booker.

A busy first half term with so much to come in the next. Please keep our school community in your prayers; you are always in ours.

Warmest regards



Mrs A Moise-Dixon
Head Teacher