



# Saint Joseph's

## CATHOLIC SCHOOL

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Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2024

**He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart, yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end.**

**- Ecclesiastes 3:11**

Dear Parents/Carers,

I hope this letter finds you well, you have managed to enjoy a restful and positive summer break, and that your children are looking forward to the new academic year at St Joseph's. It is a great privilege to be writing my first letter to the St Joseph's community and I promise to lead the school with care and compassion. It is essential that we continue to work together to provide the very best opportunities for our children. The school will challenge our pupils academically in the classroom and provide subject, social and cultural capital. The academic, pastoral and spiritual pillars of the school will continue to enable character development so that every pupil can be the best version of themselves and achieve their excellence and eudaimonia (highest level of self-fulfilment and happiness). I look forward to meeting you in person at the Information and Parents' Evenings this term and I would like to thank you in advance for your support and togetherness as we take St Joseph's on the journey from good to great.

### Staff News

I am very much looking forward to welcoming new staff to the St Joseph's family. Welcome to our middle leaders, Mrs Hansford who returns to St Joseph's as Head of English, Mr Kellie joins us as Head of Geography, Mrs Ingham as Head of History and Dr Evans as Second in Science. In addition, our new teaching staff includes Miss Stokes (English), Mr Allen (Maths), Mr Johnstone (ICT), Ms Fulton (Art/Product Design) and Mrs Hambly (Science) and Mrs Newton as our Teaching Assistant. I am delighted to announce and congratulate Mrs Nobis who has completed her NPQH, a qualification that supports the preparation for Deputy Headship and Headship. This two-year course requires an understanding of the best educational practices, and I know St Joseph's will benefit from the knowledge and expertise acquired.

Mr McParland will continue to support the School in September for two days a week to ensure a smooth handover of the leadership baton. I would like to thank him for his dedication to St Joseph's.

### GCSE Results

We are very proud of this year group. Many of our pupils have achieved excellent GCSE grades, and some have had to overcome challenging personal issues to outperform their target grades. Much of this credit must go to the positive and resilient way that they have approached their studies at St Joseph's, and their dedication to succeed. There was a lovely atmosphere in school as they celebrated their outstanding performance, lots of incredibly happy pupils, and the vast majority achieved the grades required to move on to their next steps in education.

We are very happy to share that 70% of our pupils achieved a grade 4 or above in English language or literature, and that 65% achieved a grade 4 or above in Maths which is 5% above the national average. In addition, our Separate Science passes were 84% in Biology, 74% in Physics, and 68% in Chemistry at grade 4 and above. We are also celebrating a 100% pass rate in BTEC Creative Media, with 62% of pupils achieving merit or distinction, and an impressive 73% achieving merit or distinction in Engineering Design. Of course, whilst we must congratulate the pupils for performing so well, we must not forget to thank their amazing teachers and Teaching Assistants, our wonderful Pastoral Team, and all the support staff who work here to make this such a wonderful, successful, and positive community.

### Structure of the School Day

From September, we have a new structure to the school day, moving to a 5 period one hour teaching day. The school day start, and finish times will now be 5 minutes earlier, 8:50am and 3:30pm respectively. Morning registration is now slightly earlier and will be a 5-minute session starting at 8:50am and the afternoon tutor time (where assemblies will be scheduled) will move to 2:10pm. The benefits of having this new setup are numerous. A pastoral catch up is now possible in the middle of the day, alongside a lunch break that is at the same for the entire school; tutors will be able to see their tutees and make sure the day starts positively. There is now only one period after lunch and with two healthy breaks in the day, it is our intention that pupils can maintain momentum in their learning. Furthermore, activity participation can be checked and clarified, further improving our safeguarding procedures at the end of the school day. We are confident that this change will improve our academic, pastoral and extra-curricular provision further, and most importantly, enhance pupil experience.

### St Joseph's Site

A huge thank you must go to the Estates team and contractors who have worked tirelessly over the summer break, improving our facilities and getting St Joseph's ready for the start of term. Work on the Dining Area started in July and is now up and running to provide our delicious and nutritious snacks and lunches to our pupils. The two school boilers have been replaced ready for the winter months ahead. We have redeveloped the inside/outside courtyard space with a new canopy and flooring which will provide our pupils with further recreational space. In addition, a new classroom space, named 'The Hub' has been created so pupils have an alternative learning space. New floorings have been laid in St Isidor building, the Drama & Dance Studio has been repainted alongside general site maintenance. PAT testing of electrical equipment has been completed throughout the school, five-year electrical fixed wiring inspection has been signed off and the biannual fire risk assessments throughout the school have been completed.

### Uniform

Several bones of contention that surface every year are the wearing of black, branded trainer-style shoes, skirt length and the wearing of earrings/jewellery. Copies of the uniform expectations are on the website in the behaviour policy and include visual reminders of acceptable footwear and piercings. <https://sjcs.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/School-Uniform-Guide-Jan-2023.pdf>

We will not be allowing any non-school branded hoodies anywhere in school, including the playground and field. Children can wear a coat over their shirt, blazer and an optional V-neck black jumper is available. Your understanding and support are appreciated, and we look forward to all our pupils taking pride in the high standards of their uniform.

### Welcome Events and Key Dates (Autumn Term 1)

I am very much looking forward to becoming acquainted with many of our parents at our Information Evenings, Parents' Evenings and GCSE Mocks Reveal Evening. It is always our intention (whenever possible) to run after-school events on Thursday evening.

Date and Event	Timing & additional information
12 <sup>th</sup> September – Information Evening	Year 7 - 4.00pm to 5.00pm & Year 8 - 5.30pm to 6.30pm
19 <sup>th</sup> September – Information Evening	Year 9 - 4.00pm to 5.00pm & Year 10 - 5.30pm to 6.30pm
26 <sup>th</sup> September – Open Morning	9:30am-12:30pm and Evening 5:30pm-7:30pm for prospective families
3 <sup>rd</sup> October – Year 7 Form Tutor Evening	Online Meetings from 4.30pm to 7.00pm to discuss transition and settling in



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17 <sup>th</sup> October – Year 11 Mock Examinations Results Reveal Evening	5:30pm (catch-up session available on Friday 18 <sup>th</sup> October)
22 <sup>nd</sup> October – Year 7 House Party	During period 5 – celebrating their first half term

These events are a great opportunity to meet members of the Leadership Team, your child's tutor, as well as several other staff. Please note, supervision on-site after the school day will be available for our pupils, if required.

#### **Mobile Phones**

All mobile phones must be switched off and not used in any school building or premises between 8.50am and 3.30pm. Any pupil who uses a mobile phone during these hours will have the phone confiscated, to be returned at the end of the school day. If pupils fail to hand in a phone when requested by a member of staff or who continue to break this rule, they will face a consequence which could include Heads of Year or the Leadership Team taking possession of the phone during the school day. We encourage parents/carers to be supportive of this and to not contact their children on their devices during the school day. If parents/carers need to contact pupils in an emergency or contact home is required by a pupil, the School Reception must be used, and we are always available to support in full.

#### **Extra-Curricular Activities**

At St Joseph's, we pride ourselves on the provision of our extra-curricular activities, and I encourage all children to take advantage of all the opportunities afforded them. These will start in September and Form tutors will also talk pupils through the options and parents/carers can find out more about some of the activities on offer at the Information Evenings.

If you have any further questions in the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact me, or any of the Leadership Team.

With kindest regards,

Matthew Higgins  
Headmaster