

22 May 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

Looking forward to Trinity 2 - Middle School

I hope you and your families are safe and well. At the end of a Trinity half-term which has been demanding in ways that none of us ever expected, students will be glad of a well-deserved Exeat. While the change to remote learning has been challenging at times, the change has also provided an opportunity for students to demonstrate creativity and determination. Teaching and pastoral staff have commented on these characteristics week in, week out, and we have ourselves have been buoyed by the energy and positivity which St Dunstan's students bring to school life. I wish in this letter to draw your attention to some important elements in the upcoming Trinity 2 half term.

Year 10

Learning Scores on student working habits and contribution to remote learning this half term were uploaded to the Parent Portal yesterday afternoon. Please review these with your son or daughter and discuss what has gone well and how the descriptors indicate what behaviours can be altered and improved to make Trinity 2 a significant session of quality learning.

Sixth Form Virtual Question & Answer Sessions. I know that many of you will already be looking at Sixth Forms and considering the courses and atmosphere which will best stretch and support your child from 16+. On Thursdays 11 and 18 June from 1600-1635 through Microsoft Teams, I will be joined by Mr Brewer (Head of Sixth Form) and the Sixth Form team to introduce the St Dunstan's College Sixth Form programme and diploma, and respond to any parent questions. Mrs Blake-James will send an invitation to all parents after Exeat and will encourage you to submit questions via our online form (sent after Exeat) in advance.

Return to School and Year 10 End of Year Assessments.

As Mr Hewlett and Mr Johnson indicated in their separate letters to you on 15 May, the school is responding to the government's instruction for schools to commence a phased return, starting with Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 students from 1 June. The College's 'Reopening of College Working Party' is drawing all relevant members of staff together to ensure that the school's anticipated reopening for small groups of Year 10 and Year 12 students can be delivered safely, in order to reintroduce the benefits of human interaction, pastoral support, small group academic teaching, and all the many advantages of participating in a community. This will not take place earlier than 15 June and only after due consideration to the complexities of the task have been worked through.

In the context of developing government guidance, the College is planning for Year 10 pupils to sit their End of Year 10 assessments at the end of August, no earlier than week-beginning 24 August. Our expectation therefore is that Year 10 students should have a complete break over half-term and staff are not setting extensive revision work to be completed by Trinity 2, although there will be small-scale assessments of the type which normally occur at the end of taught topics and units.

For Year 10, this is particularly relevant in the Sciences, where we would want to begin the Autumn term with pupils knowing whether they are completing a Double Award or Triple Award GCSE Science programme in Year 11. I will be writing to parents and carers over Exeat with the school's recommendation for Double or Triple Science Awards and welcome dialogue with parents to ascertain the right pathway for their child. For those students who are ambitious to take Triple Science in Year 11 and wish to provide evidence of their attainment at the end of this academic year in order to best make this pathway decision, I will be passing on a full revision list from which students may wish to commence revision.

Year 11

Oxbridge Preparation Programme: I am delighted to announce that the school commences its Oxbridge Preparation Programme for any interested Year 11 student in Trinity 2. If any student has ever wondered whether Oxford, Cambridge, or another of the very top universities in the country, or around the world, might be for them - or if they have never thought about it but are even a little curious to find out more - then Mr Scambler (Head of Year 13) will be running this seminar through Microsoft Teams 1510-1600 on Thursday 4 June. This is the perfect opportunity to find out more about the support we provide for Oxford and Cambridge university applications and on the way, Mr Scambler and students will discuss other interesting ideas and develop students' thinking about the forms that academic challenge can take in the Sixth Form. Please email tscambler@sdmil.org.uk

A Level Bridging Courses. Year 11 students will continue to study their A Level bridging courses for three weeks following the commencement of Trinity 2. I have been pleased with the positive feedback from students over this recent half term and the resolve which students have shown. From Trinity 2, students currently studying at other schools who will be joining St Dunstan's in Year 12, will also join in these lessons and I am confident that they will not only be made to feel welcome by our students but that their contributions will challenge, enrich and encourage our existing students to prepare for the exciting prospect of Sixth Form next academic year.

Reporting. At the end of the courses, staff will compile a report for each student and present a preparation for A Level sheet which will summarise the necessary and recommended reading prior to commencing Year 12 courses.

Book Return. I would normally indicate to you the date and procedures for the return of books and resources loaned to students over their GCSE courses. The school's

'Reopening of College Working Party' is currently looking at the safe facilitation of this event, since it will require significant social distancing and may take place over more than one day. I will pass on the arrangements as soon as possible in Trinity 2 but in the meantime, I encourage all students to gather, organise and store safely all the College textbooks and resources which are to be returned and to seek the whereabouts of any currently missing items where possible

Finally, I would like to remind all students across the Middle School that the daily form time is an important part of the pastoral care which the school provides for all students. Students continue to have access to the support of their form tutor each day and I would remind them that the 'Virtual' sections on Firefly seek to provide the ongoing assemblies, Head of Year messages, and resources for care through our counsellors and advice services should anyone need them.

Wishing you and your families a safe and restful half term ahead,

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul O'Dwyer', written in a cursive style.

Mr Paul O'Dwyer
Head of Middle School