

As Head of Year I am the first point of contact with any pastoral concerns. Years 10 and 11 are especially demanding phases in a young person's school career. Not only is there a lot to contend with from an academic point of view, there is also a great deal of pressure in terms of the business of growing up. The evolving nature of friendships, social groups, family arrangements, responsibilities, temptations and distractions can all combine to make the mid teenage years very challenging.

And I certainly recognise that if it's difficult for the young people, it's no easier for their parents! Trust me, we understand what you're going through!

To attempt to give a list of possible areas of support students and their parents might need would take all evening, and probably still not be comprehensive. But I and my team of excellent form tutors are here to help and support wherever we can. The message we give out to the young people is that "If it's important to you, it's important to us" and we hope that both students and parents will always feel able to approach the school with any concerns they might have.

If you do wish to raise with the school with a query or concern, whether academic or pastoral, or most likely a mix of both, we ask that you go through the school office in the first instance, who will relay your request for contact to the relevant Head of Year or Department. The school phone number and email are readily available on the website. We do ask that you do not contact individual subject teachers in the first instance, to avoid swamping them with communication. If it would be productive and appropriate to arrange a meeting with a particular teacher, the Heads of Year working with the Heads of Department will sort that.

All student in Year 10 are issued with a planner, and we monitor closely how they are using this. Not only should it be used as a diary and a list of homeworks due, but also as a planner in a true sense. I encourage students not only to record work set, but also to plan when it is going to be **done**. **Parents are still required to sign planners, and may communicate any concerns in the relevant box at the bottom of the week page.** You may also see symbols (hopefully not too often) denoting problems with forgotten equipment, homework not handed in or issue with behaviour. These will be identified and followed up by the form teacher and myself, but of course if you have any concerns, you are encouraged to get in touch via the school office.

We do have a traditional Parents' Evening this year and that will provide further opportunities for discussions with individual teachers. I will of course be available on the evening, together with senior colleagues and representatives from the Careers department.

The tutorial programme is designed to cover issues including study skills, resilience, dealing with stress, dangers and challenges, use of the Internet, issues to do with bullying online and offline, health and safety, sexual health and wellbeing, financial awareness, career and post-16 options and other areas of interest and concern to this age group. The programme is delivered in morning registration periods, assemblies and in discrete timetabled sessions later in the year. The aim is to offer a broad range of topics and also allow the young people the opportunity to express themselves and find their own direction.

What we hope to offer, and what we encourage, is a healthy balance between academic work and extra curricular activities. There are lots of opportunities to get involved in sport, exercise, music, drama, technical work, computing, debating, charity and fundraising, art & design- the list goes on. Details of opportunities are published in form period, in assembly and in most cases on the school website. There are many trips and activities on offer throughout the two years, which are designed to enhance academic progress, offer opportunities to make new friends and contacts and broaden

cultural horizons and experience. The extra-curricular programme at St. Aidan's is at least as important as the academic curriculum and all students are encouraged to get involved. If any young person feels there is absolutely nothing for them, or that what they are interesting in is not offered, we want to hear from them. At the GCSE presentation of certificates evening, we usually include at the end a lovely memory montage of photos of the students during their five years in the stem school. It's significant that there are not that many pictures featuring them sitting in lessons.

I greatly look forward to working with you to help the youngsters in our charge make the very best of their time in Key Stage 4. One thing's for sure – it will go by all too quickly.

David Bean

Head of Year 10

21st September 2017