



ST. AIDAN'S

CHURCH OF ENGLAND HIGH SCHOOL

Summer Holiday Challenge

Dear Parent/Carers

Thank you for your support during this difficult academic year. We have been humbled by the resilience our Year 7s have shown. They have embraced life at St Aidan's, and the enthusiasm they have brought to each day has lifted the whole school.

Whilst we think that Year 7 students have had a successful year, we recognise that the pandemic has had an impact, and that this impact has disproportionately affected some students.

Academically, Year 7s have made good progress. Most subjects have been able to complete their programme of study. Teachers have reported that those students who were able to engage effectively with online learning are generally at the level they would expect. However, we know that some students, through no fault of their own, found online learning hard. Teaching and learning is most effective when a student is face to face, with an experienced teacher, who knows them well, and some students have struggled when this hasn't been possible.

The plan to support students who have struggled this year will involve a number of different elements. Capacity is being introduced to provide additional small group teaching for some students in Year 8, this might mean a modified timetable to work on key skills. In some cases, this might mean extra lessons after school or at lunch time. Teachers are currently adapting schemes of work to allow some areas to be revisited in future years. The relationship between student and teacher is always important, as they get to know their classes, teachers can match their teaching to their student's needs to ensure good progress is made. We will be using data from Year 7 to identify students who need more support in Year 8 but we welcome feedback from parents to help us identify those most in need. As always, we remain committed to our student's well-being as well as their academic progress. We will continue to offer a wide range of pastoral support through form tutors, Heads of Year, school nurse, school counsellor and learning mentors. Importantly, all of this is best done in term time, under the supervision of staff who know the students well. We will not be sending students home next week with a large amount of work to complete over the summer.

Pastorally, Year 7 students have missed out on a lot this year. We think there are three areas that students should use the time in the summer holidays to work on.

Headteacher: Mr C Burt

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Socialising. It's been hard for Year 7 to build up the skills associated with socialising outside of school. Organising to meet friends face to face, not on-line, is a skill, and many students will need support developing that skill. This is a problem we are increasingly seeing in our older students as well.

Independence. Simple things like going to the shops, getting on a bus, using cash and cards to buy things, have been made more difficult. We would like students, with your help, to become more independent.

Expanding horizons. It has been hard for students to try new things. Travel has been limited. Clubs have not been running. We need our students to understand the importance and satisfaction of trying new things and embracing new experiences. Rather than spending the summer, inside, studying or in front of a screen, we would like year 7 students to engage with a Summer Holiday Challenge. A series of tasks and challenges that they can attempt in the holidays. We will be introducing this in form time this week and sending home a chart for you to stick on the fridge! We have attached a copy for you to look at.

I am delighted to announce that Miss Strickland will be this year groups Head of Year in Year 8. She is an experienced member of the pastoral team, and a dedicated teacher. She will be spending time at the beginning of Year 8 discussing and evaluating the results of the 'Summer Holiday Challenge'.

Thank you again for all the support you have given the school this year,

Kind regards

Mr Taylor
Head of Year 7

Headteacher: Mr C Burt

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