



# ST. AIDAN'S

CHURCH OF ENGLAND HIGH SCHOOL

02 April 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

## End of Spring Term Letter

As we come to the end of another very busy term, I would like to thank you all for the support and dedication you give to St Aidan's. Together, we strive to ensure that our students receive the best possible education, alongside the care and guidance they deserve. We acknowledge that, as a school, we do not always get everything right. In such a large school community, we often find ourselves navigating a path that may not always please everyone. However, we deeply appreciate your patience, understanding, and valuable feedback in all that we do.

It is impossible to capture in a single letter all the incredible things our St Aidan's family has accomplished over the past few weeks and months. Therefore, I encourage you to read our fantastic *InTouch* magazine, which celebrates the brilliance of St Aidan's. In fact, as I began writing this letter, a student was sitting on the sofa in my office having some "time out." They told me about their revision plans while I explained that I was working on my termly letter. In the spirit of the honesty I always encourage in our young people, they remarked, "*The InTouch magazine is full of all the really fun, good stuff we do, and your letters just seem a bit long and boring, Mrs. Dover.*"

So, (feedback taken!), I apologise if my letter does not capture the excitement and vibrancy of the *InTouch* magazine. However, I hope you will find the content informative, if nothing else.

## National Education Changes

The past few months have been an interesting time for education and schools. Ofsted has revised the Education Inspection Framework, which will come into effect next academic year. Preparing for this will be a key focus of our strategic and operational school improvement priorities.

The long-awaited National Curriculum and Assessment Review has also been shared with school leaders. As a result, we must ensure we have the necessary roles and resources in place to implement these changes for the benefit of all our students while meeting new accountability measures.

A welcome addition to the expectations placed on schools is the introduction of a mandatory Climate Action Plan, which must be in place by September 2025. Additionally, St Aidan's has been placed on the SIAMS inspection list for next year. This Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools assesses how each school's theologically rooted Christian vision drives its work and enables it to fulfil its foundation as a Church school. Although this inspection is separate from Ofsted, it is conducted with similar rigor and depth.

## Funding and Developments

Schools continue to face financial challenges in relation to the expectations placed upon them. However, this is a campaign I have been fighting throughout my 28-year career, and I will always strive to make the best possible decisions in the interest of our students while remaining mindful of financial constraints.

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Headteacher: Mrs S Dover

Much of the funding schools receive is ring-fenced for specific purposes. We are, therefore, extremely grateful to our Board of Trustees, who have released a portion of our reserves—following a successful bid on our part—for much-needed improvements to our school buildings. Over the next few years, we will invest in key areas of our school site to ensure that the learning environment for both staff and students is fit for purpose.

Although we are still in the "wish list" phase, our desired projects include:

- A separate visitors' entrance and reception
- A new student services/reception area
- A facelift for the external facade of the main building
- Refurbishment of the Sixth Form café
- A bespoke Sixth Form centre, including a common room and private study area
- A redesigned, state-of-the-art library and resource centre
- An external path to reduce corridor congestion
- Increased external seating and eating areas
- Improved toilet facilities
- A redesigned SEND hub catering to students with additional needs

For this final project, we have engaged a specialist company in designing neurodivergent-friendly and inclusive spaces. Their expertise will enable us to prioritise student well-being and ensure we fully meet the needs of all our students. We look forward to seeing these developments take shape over the coming years.

As you can appreciate, schools across the country must be creative in generating additional income to support their students and facilities. Next academic year, we will reach out to parents for their support and ideas regarding fundraising and sponsorship. In the meantime, if you or your organisation are interested in contributing to these initiatives, please contact our finance team.

### **External Exams**

When we return after the Easter break, our Year 11 and Year 13 students will be just days away from their GCSE, A-Level, and other external exams. We recognise that this is a stressful time for students, parents, and carers alike. If you have any concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out for support.

Our Exams Officers—Mrs. Brown (Year 11) and Mrs. Humphry (Post-16)—are doing an incredible job ensuring that everything is in place for a smooth exam process. If there is anything else you need, please get in touch.

### **Staffing**

We are delighted to announce the appointment of four new members of the Senior Leadership Team:

After Easter, Mrs. Johnston will take up her substantive position as Deputy Headteacher: Pastoral and Safeguarding. Mr. Hainsworth will assume the role of Deputy Headteacher: School Improvement and Growth. Mrs. Orton will take up the role as Assistant Headteacher: Sixth Form. In September 2025, we will welcome Mrs. Stockton-Pitt as Deputy Headteacher: Curriculum.

Additionally, Mrs. Hall will return from maternity leave next term to take up the position of SENDCo.

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Headteacher: Mrs S Dover

Sadly, at the end of this week, we say goodbye to some much-loved members of staff who are moving on to new opportunities. We thank them for their hard work, commitment, and dedication to St Aidan's, as well as for the care they have shown our students. We wish them all the best in their future endeavours:

- Mrs. Atherton (Pastoral Inclusion Manager)
- Mrs. Porter (Teaching Assistant)
- Mrs. Otway (Teacher of RS)
- Mrs. Macer (Medical Room Support)
- Mrs. Douglas (Assistant Headteacher)
- Dr. Holt (Assistant Headteacher)
- Mrs. Rowland (SENDCo)

### **A Prayer for our School Community**

Dear God,

As this term comes to a close, we thank You for the many blessings You have bestowed upon us. We are grateful for the knowledge we have gained, the friendships we have made, and the strength You have given us to face each challenge with courage.

We thank You for our teachers and staff, who guide and inspire us every day. May they be blessed with rest and renewal over the break.

As we say goodbye to those who are leaving, we offer our heartfelt gratitude for their dedication, hard work, and care. We pray that You bless them on their new journeys, filling their hearts with joy and peace as they move forward. Their impact on our school will be remembered, and we are thankful for all they have given to our community.

We pray for our school community, that we may continue to grow in kindness, understanding, and wisdom. May the lessons learned this term stay with us as we look forward to new opportunities in the next.

Please watch over all the students and staff as we go our separate ways for the holidays. Keep us safe and help us return next term with hearts full of hope and enthusiasm.

We ask for Your continued guidance and presence in our lives.

Amen.

On behalf of all the staff at St Aidan's, I wish you a restful and enjoyable Easter break and thank you once again for your continued support.

With warmest wishes



Mrs Siân Dover

Headteacher

St Aidan's Church of England High School

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