

Welcome to our first newsletter from SM6 to our college community of family and friends. We hope you will enjoy reading our first term's news and celebrations. If your son/daughter has had success out of college, please do let us know so we can celebrate together.



Mrs L Horton

UKMT Senior Maths Challenge 2023

Congratulations to our SM6 team who have secured an outstanding result, with 80% achieving an award in this highly competitive national event – nationally only 66% of entrants were certificated. We are incredibly proud of our talented students. Best of luck to B. Fintan, B. Brunning and J. Xavier who achieved the gold award and will now progress to the next round. Also, congratulations to C. Ting for her success in the Maths Girls' Olympiad. Our huge thanks to the Maths team who have provided outstanding support with their preparations.



Number of UCAS applications submitted

This term we have submitted around 60 UCAS applications for HE study, including 42 who met the early entry deadline of 16th October for Medicine, Dentistry and Oxford/Cambridge. We will be submitting lots more in the coming weeks!

Half Term 1 Rewards

1,422 'SM6 Shout Outs' and 40 SM6 Café Pod vouchers were issued to students during this first half term due to being nominated by their teachers in recognition of exceptional effort, outstanding work, being an upstanding member of the sixth form, and much, much more. They know who they are – congratulations and keep up the great work! In addition, we have recognised an incredible 400 students for 100% attendance during our Attendance Focus weeks with a reward. Well done to all. Next half term we will be doing the same for those with exceptional punctuality to lessons.

SM6 Sport including 'Sport for All'

Our sixth form sport is now underway with fixtures for our football, basketball and netball teams. Next half term we will be launching table tennis, badminton, ladies' football and rugby teams too. Our first community 'Sport For All' participation event took place this week with a fun football tournament. Despite the horrendous weather, around 50 students got involved, with prizes for the winners and the best dressed! Our next fun sporting event will be netball and all students are welcome.



SM6 Activism – Charity Fundraising

SM6 students had the opportunity to learn more about the experience of one of our students with a brain tumour this week. They responded overwhelmingly to her bake sale, raising £400 for the Brain Tumour charity.



Coming up next half term

- Half Term 2 begins Monday 6th November, 8.45am
- Open Evening Thursday 9th November 6.00-8.30pm - for prospective students starting in September 2024
- GCSE Maths and English resit exams – for those who have been entered:
 - English: Tuesday 7th and Thursday 9th November
 - Maths: Wednesday 8th, Friday 10th and Monday 13th November
- Mock interviews – Oxbridge and Medicine applicants
- Mock Examinations (Y13 & some Y12) w/c. Monday 4th December 2023
- UCAS Applications - ongoing
- Tutor 1-2-1s – ongoing throughout the term
- Careers & Progression 1-2-1s with Mr Charlton – available and ongoing throughout the term – students should approach Mr Charlton directly for these.
- Netball 'Sports For All' event
- Stress Less event 2
- SM6 lunchtime clinic 1 'Cooking on a budget'
- SM6 lunch time clinic 2 – Personal Statement support



Personal Development and Enrichment – core requirements of a sixth form study programme

As part of our responsibilities as a sixth form provider, SM6 is required by the government to provide timetabled Personal Development and Enrichment to all students alongside their academic studies, as part of their core programme. This is delivered through our NST, Tutor Time R&R and enrichment, and PPD Immersion sessions, and amounts to 2 hours of timetabled activity per week, with a further 16 hours per year of immersion activity.

St Mary's College is very proud of the ambitious and outstanding wider provision we provide to our students. The content reflects a wider concern from universities, business and employers that students who only engage with academic study, whilst they may secure outstanding results, are often lacking in the skills and attributes needed to succeed as active and socially aware citizens once they have left school, but also in the increasingly competitive labour market and the modern workplace. Our wider provision is, of course, rooted in our Catholic values, and reflects our care for our students and commitment to ensuring that they are able to mature whilst they are with us and become highly competitive in this respect, alongside having outstanding academic outcomes. And we know it is successful – SM6 graduates are distinctively recognised by universities and our wider contacts as well-rounded, mature and independent young people.

This week we have met with students to explain the purpose of this curriculum, and why we are unable to excuse them from attendance and participation. Because it is a government requirement, we are also unable to excuse students with 4 subjects on their timetable. We expect students to attend all timetabled sessions, including NST, Tutor Time and PPD. Overall attendance reports, which may also be requested by universities, apprenticeship providers and employers as part of references, will include attendance to these sessions. We hope that students, parents and carers will recognise the value of this wider programme, and we ask that parents and carers support us in upholding these expectations.

Some students have queried why the Tutor Time R&R and Enrichment sessions take place in the mornings, when they may not have a lesson until later on that day. This is to fit in with the wider school timetable as all our tutors are also teaching staff. All students should have a minimum of 15 hours per week of homework and independent study to complete for their courses outside the classroom, and so any time they have between Tutor Time and a later lesson should be used to complete this work in our dedicated study areas.



Staff absence at SM6

I wanted to clarify the arrangements in place should a teacher be absent from school for any reason. Students should attend classes as usual, where they will be registered by a member of staff (from the same subject area where possible) and work will be set. They will remain in the classroom completing the work which will need to be submitted before the end of the timetabled lesson. Where possible, a member of staff from the subject area will be available should students have any questions or concerns about the work. I want to make it clear that we do not cancel lessons under any circumstances which have not been communicated to students, parents and carers in advance.



Catholic Life at SM6 – Update

As you will know, our Catholic Values underpin everything we do at St Mary's College and Sixth Form, not least in our outstanding SM6 pastoral care which extends to all sixth formers. This term we have launched our R&R and NST programmes, which is the mandatory core personal development curriculum offer we are required to provide by the government – see above.

As we are a Catholic sixth form, these programmes are rooted in Catholic values and teaching, and provide opportunities for reflection and collective worship, for all members of SM6, whether they are Catholic, of other faiths, or none.

We have also appointed our Agape Ambassadors - a group of students who have identified themselves as wanting to share, promote and uphold our Catholic Life through work such as charity fundraising, raising awareness of various issues, community service and much more. Over the next term, as we move from Ordinary Time into the season of Advent, we will be working with the Chaplaincy team and the Agape Ambassadors to find appropriate ways to reflect these rich and beautiful traditions of the Church to all.

16-19 Support Fund (Bursary) Information

Information about our 16-19 Financial Support (Bursary) can be accessed on our website [here](#).

For those students who have already completed an application, the first award is due to be made by the end of October for those students who met the eligibility criteria. Please contact Clare Horgan or the SMC Finance Team if you have any queries. Please be aware that any student who has been awarded the bursary can request stationery items from the Grads' Office on the top floor of the SM6 building.



16-19 Study Support Information

St Mary's College Sixth Form will, once again, be offering study support for eligible 16-19 students as part of the DFE post-COVID response to lost learning. Although the pandemic is thankfully in the past, research shows that the disruption to learning is still very much with us, as cohorts affected by the pandemic, including those in post-16 education, make their way through the various stages of learning. This fund is targeted at students in most need, offering support for recovery of lost learning. We have already begun to contact students who are eligible for this support, including:

- Those who will be resitting GCSE maths and English examinations
- Those who live within certain postcode catchments, as defined by the DFE
- Students in receipt of the 16-19 bursary, and those with EHCPs, may also be eligible for support.

Our support offer will include small group and 1-2-1 tuition, either with a sixth form learning mentor, SM6 Grad, or through an accredited online tuition agency, depending on the support need.

Eligible students will also be encouraged to attend a 6-week short course on general study skills for sixth form students, which will include planning and managing a study workload, revision skills, referencing, and much more.

A reminder to students and parents/carers that there is also a broad and comprehensive offer of subject-specific academic support available at SM6. This support is available to students who choose to drop-in, but teachers may also direct a student to attend should they judge that further support will be needed to achieve their full potential, or if attendance has been below expectations. Where appropriate, teachers will contact parents/carers to make them aware that this is needed. The full list of academic support can be found in this [booklet](#) (see pages 4-5).



IMPORTANT NOTICES

Smoking & Vaping

A reminder to parents/carers and students that smoking and vaping is, without exception, prohibited anywhere on the St Mary's College site. We also do not allow students to smoke/vape anywhere outside our perimeter walls/fencing and pavements, including outside the SM6 gates. We have recently received a number of complaints about SM6 students smoking/vaping outside the school on Inglemire Lane and Cranbrook Avenue from passers-by, neighbours and members of the public. This behaviour brings our school and sixth form into disrepute, and also does not set a good example to our younger community members. We take this extremely seriously, therefore, any student caught smoking or vaping either on site or outside our perimeter will be issued with a Final Written Warning, which will state that, if this behaviour is repeated, the student will be asked to leave the sixth form. Parents/carers will also be notified. If they choose to vape or smoke, students should go for a walk away from the school site!

We do understand that young people who have become addicted to smoking/vaping may want to kick the habit but find it difficult to do so. We have support at SM6 available for this – students should speak to their form tutor, or a member of the SM6 Year Team, if they would like this help. Any student who does receive a Final Written Warning will also be automatically signposted to this support.

Coursework Plagiarism

Over the past few weeks we have dealt with a number of instances of plagiarism in student coursework. A reminder please to students and parents/carers that coursework must be the work of the individual student. When submitting coursework to the exam board as part of the final grade, a candidate will be asked to sign that the work they submit complies with the following statement: 'the work which you submit for assessment must be your own'; 'you must not copy from someone else or allow another candidate to copy from you'. Students should be aware that if they are found to be cheating around coursework, their work may be given a zero mark, and more seriously, they risk disqualification. More information for candidates around coursework assessment can be found [here](#).



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