

Oct 12th, 2021

Dear parents/carers

A very warm welcome to my third letter of the academic year. I hope that the following information gives a flavour of life at St Anne's. It is important to recognise and celebrate the many positive aspects of St Anne's. From the outset of this letter, I must state that most pupils at St Anne's are great ambassadors of the school, are conforming to the rules [see below] and are enjoying their education. I know this as I frequently ask them! The role of my staff and I is to ensure that they get at least a 'good' quality of education.

A message from the Chair of Governors, Mr Thorpe

It is a privilege to write to you on behalf of the Governors. Firstly, we are a new governing board commissioned by the Diocese of Salford to oversee significant and sustainable improvements at St Anne's. As a Catholic Community we expect that our faith characteristics will underpin all we do.

There is much work to be done and the challenge to bring back St Anne's to the standards that your children deserve cannot be understated. For this reason, as well as engaging an outstanding Executive Headteacher with significant experience and expertise in leading improvement in difficult circumstances, my fellow governors and I can point to similar experience of leading schools through phased improvement too. It is our job to ensure that standards are set high, and improvements can be evidenced and maintained. We provide scrutiny, challenge and support to the Senior Leadership Team at school, and it is my sincere undertaking that we will discharge our responsibilities with professionalism, diligence and integrity. Equally, I am very conscious that the community of St Anne's have previously been provided with a rosy picture of the future that has not been delivered. There is no quick fix available to us – it is only through relentless and methodical application of best practice that we can create a school that we can be proud of. Mr Logue, the Senior Leadership Team, myself and my fellow governors are committed to the undertaking, and I would like to thank all parents in anticipation of your support for the Senior Leadership Team and all the staff.

Mission and Ethos Team [MET] update

The team met on Monday 4th Oct and the focus was on our plans to develop and embed a new school mission statement. This will be ratified at a whole school INSET day in November. This INSET day is fundamental to our ethos as a Catholic community where staff will have the opportunity to learn more about their calling to **serve** our pupils and the community. It is also an opportunity for all staff to reaffirm their commitment to St Anne's.

The Catholic Life of the School

This important aspect of belonging to St Anne's continues to grow and develop. Year 7 have participated in retreats at the Marist centre and a Year 7 welcome mass in October will be celebrated by Fr Philip from St Joseph's Reddish, with parents warmly invited also. This will take place on Friday 22nd October. Our faith groups continue to flourish and our *GIFT* team [Growing in Faith Together] have organised a form prayer activity where over the year one form will lead another form in morning prayer meaning all form groups will lead prayer and pray as a group in the chapel during the year. The Caritas group continues to collect for refugees whilst our '*Laudato Bee*' group continue to cultivate our school garden and a recycling project is beginning.

Expectations, Pupil behaviour and Uniform

I am delighted to report that our standards of behaviour have vastly improved. I know this as I walk round the school many pupils and staff state that the atmosphere is so much more conducive to learning. This is great to see and hear and is an important aspect of making sure that St Anne's is at least a 'good' school. However, there are a small number of pupils whose behaviour continues to be a concern and their place at St Anne's is at risk. Likewise, I am so proud to see all the pupils in full school uniform. Wearing St Anne's uniform instils pride in our pupils, giving them a sense of belonging and creates a great identity for the school in the community.

Rules of St Anne's

As a school it is important that we establish simple, fair and transparent rules that are accepted by all at St Anne's. Importantly, we also need to share these rules with pupils, staff and parents so that we can apply them consistently and constantly. The simple, fair and transparent rules at St Anne's are as follows.

1. Mobile phones should NOT be out in school until the pupils leave the main gate on Glenfield Road
2. Uniform must be correct. This includes appropriate hair styles and no wearing of any jewellery
3. Coats must be taken off when inside the building
4. Be respectful to peers, teachers, support staff and the environment

These rules are fair, easy to understand and importantly, will be enforced. If we all abide by these rules the outcome will be a calm, purposeful environment that will benefit everyone.

Sexual Harassment is not 'Just Banter'

A recent Ofsted review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges in the UK, reported that over 37% of girls have been sexually harassed while at school. At St Anne's we will enforce a zero-tolerance approach to any harmful sexual behaviours and strongly encourage pupils to report any incidents that concern them to us as soon as possible, either in person or via our online 'Tell Us' portal (http://www.bit.ly/tell_us). More information and advice can be found on our safeguarding portal www.bit.ly/stannes_safeguarding. Parents can also help to educate their child by discussing with them the definition of sexual harassment below.

"Sexual harassment is any type of conduct that is of a sexual nature. It is done with aim of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, embarrassing or offensive environment for another person. It does not have to be aimed at the opposite sex".

The key message for our community is that unwanted sexual comments are never 'just banter.'

Parental Communication and Class Charts

Since September we have moved our main communication with parents over to Class Charts. This allows pupils and parents to view information on rewards, behaviours, homework's, detentions and announcements as well as allowing pupils to access the rewards shop.

It is important that you have a log in for class charts and these were sent at the start of the school year. If you have not received a log in, please contact school reception. As a community we are delighted with pupil engagement with Class Charts and especially the 500 pupils who achieved their bronze award badge using the system in September. Very well done! Celebration of pupils' achievements is important if we want to make St Anne's a positive and productive learning environment.

Open Evening

This took place on Wednesday 22nd September and the feedback was fantastic, and the following are some of the overwhelmingly positive feedback comments from prospective parents:

- ✓ *I came to an open evening 3 years ago and the school felt very staid with both the teachers and children bored with no enthusiasm. It felt totally different this time. Much better!*
- ✓ *Staff and children were fantastic.*
- ✓ *I was shown around by a Year 11 student. He was well mannered, confident, eye contact, cheerful and really answers questions the parents had.*
- ✓ *I have seen the improvement in the standards around the community recently.*
- ✓ *Excellent, absolutely excellent. Onwards & upwards.*
- ✓ *Growing confidence – my daughter is Year 5 so we will come back next year.*

I was slightly disappointed by the turn-out though and St Anne's needs to work on building trust with the local community. However, I am confident that St Anne's has the capacity, commitment and determination to overcome any past issues and become at least a 'good' school that the community is proud to be a part of. I will be available for school tours for parents on Tuesday 12th and Thursday 14th October between 10:00 and 11:00. These are a great opportunity to speak to me about day-to-day life at St Anne's. Please contact the school reception to book a tour.

Meeting Parents Year 8 - Year 11

This was an open invitation to all parents in Years 8-11 and took place on Thursday 30th September. Overall, it was a positive evening, but parents, quite rightly, did ask some challenging questions. During this meeting I shared recent developments, outlined the new vision of St Anne's and took many questions from parents. Can I thank all the parents who turned out on the night and I ask that they support the school in its endeavour to be a great school for their children. This can't happen without the support of the parents. Again, however, I was disappointed by the turnout. I plan to do another update evening in January.

Showing Leadership...

At several recent evening events, I asked the Head Boy and Head Girl to say a few words about St Anne's. I was extremely proud that they embraced their new responsibilities and spoke confidently about St Anne's. I have no doubt that they will continue to be role models within our community. Can I also thank our amazing cohort of talented, young musicians who performed their pieces in front of families for the first time in a very long time. The pupils performed brilliantly and demonstrated a high standard of talent whilst building their confidence for the future. Well done!

Building Capability at Leadership Level

I am delighted to have appointed two new Middle Leaders to St Anne's. These posts were Geography and Physical Education Heads of Department. They are joining a changing team at St Anne's that is focusing on rapid improvements in standards of teaching and learning.

Next Years' Exams: May/June 2022

There has now been communication that next years' exams will go ahead as planned. Although there will be some minor adjustments to the exams, it is clear that the Government is determined that they will go ahead. It is therefore crucial that Year 11 and their parents understand the **importance of hard work in school and a commitment to revision at home**. The reality is that there is no substitute for hard work. Whilst many Year 11 pupils are working hard, there are some who are not. For avoidance of doubt, if pupils work hard then they are more likely to achieve.

Covid School Based Immunisation Dates

As you are aware, a team of nurses came into school on Monday 27th and Tuesday 28th September to immunise our pupils. After the 2 days I was emailed by the lead nurse who thanked the school for supporting this nation roll-out. In the email, which was highly complementary, the lead nurse stated *"the pupils' behaviour was exemplary. Everyone in our team has commented how polite your pupils have been and we have enjoyed being in your school over the past 2 days"*. I was so proud that our pupils' behaviour was acknowledged and recognised by external visitors to St Anne's.

NB: I had hoped that the disruption caused by Covid to your child's education would have settled down but sadly, it continues to make many pupils and staff having to take time off. Consequently, there continues to be disruption to your child's education. This is highly regrettable as education has suffered enough already.

Finally,

Can I take this opportunity to say a massive and genuine thank you to the vast majority of parents who I have spoken to over the past few months. Although many issues have been justifiably raised, I get the real impression speaking to parents that they wish to foster a stronger sense of community and connection with St Anne's. They too, like me, wish to address issues, overcome obstacles and attain success. On the rare occasion there is an issue, my staff and I will always go the extra mile to solve that issue. However, a small number of parents think that it is alright to be disrespectful or swear. This undermines our core value of respect. It is acceptable to express your opinion and respectfully disagree, but it is really important that we work through issues in a positive way. I politely ask if there is an issue, please speak to the staff of St Anne's in a polite and respectful manner. Thanks in advance for your co-operation.

As always, thank you for your continued support.

Mr Logue
Executive Headteacher