



In all things faithful

January 2025

Dear Parents and Carers

A warm welcome to my first newsletter of 2025. As ever, I am delighted to report that we continue to provide a great holistic education to our brilliant students. Long may this continue! We start 2025 with great optimism for this term. I hope that you enjoy reading the following as much as I enjoyed writing it.

The Catholic Life at St Damian's

As we start 2025, I am again delighted to report that our provision to deliver a genuine Catholic education continues and has a massive bearing on the moral and spiritual development of your child. I hope that you enjoy reading these opportunities below.

- **Caritas Award.** We are delighted to announce that St Damian's has been awarded a prestigious Caritas Community Engagement Award! This recognition celebrates the incredible spirit of compassion and service that defines our school family. Caritas Ambassadors are being rewarded with a special day out with bowling and lunch for all their hard work for the community. Their efforts don't stop as they are currently planning a St Valentine's Day event to support our very own Yr11 with a contribution to their prom. Well done to everyone who contributed to this wonderful achievement!
- **Charity Fundraising during Advent.** Thanks to your generosity and support, we raised a phenomenal **£2,196.18** through our Advent Caritas Gift Challenge and Christmas Jumper/Cosy Day! This money will be donated to Caritas Salford and will make a huge difference to the vital work they do with vulnerable people in our city. As a community we enjoyed a day of cosy own clothes, hot chocolate, photobooth pictures and much more. Days like these highlight the extraordinary kindness of our students, staff, and families. Thanks!
- **Confirmation Classes.** To support our Yr8 students in preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation, we have partnered with the Parish to host classes after school. These sessions will take place every Tuesday from 3:30 pm to 5:00 pm in our school hall. Please note these sessions are Parish-led through volunteers and not supervised by St Damian's staff. Last year (across two schools) 138 students were Confirmed which is a great cause for celebration. Please note that the date for the Sacrament of Confirmation with Bishop John is on 4th/5th June 2025. (Pentecost Weekend). Further details, from the parish, will follow. We are proud to support the spiritual development of our students in this way.
- **Pope's Coin.** Our local MP, The Rt Hon Angela Rayner, recently met the Pope and shared with him the importance of interfaith dialogue. During the meeting she was given a coin which she has kindly donated to St Damian's. The coin is the official medal for the twelfth year of the Pontificate of his Holiness Pope Francis. The coin is the work of Michele Celeste who also designed the medal for the eleventh year of the Pontificate. On the front of the coin is the coat of arms of the Holy Father and the reverse side of the coin depicts Jesus taking the hand of a person sinking in the water. In the background is a boat with migrants who witness this divine intervention. It shows us that through faith, God saves and safeguards the lives of those in need and those who entrust themselves to his merciful love. The coin will be displayed in our display cabinet for all to see. Thanks to Angela Rayner for kindly donating this to the school which will serve as a symbol of faith and community for years to come.



- **The Year of the Jubilee.** Excitement is building as we celebrate the *Year of the Jubilee!* Heads of Year launched this special occasion with assemblies, and form time reflections have been helping students explore its significance in the life of the Church. In addition to this, we will also welcome the Salford Diocese Jubilee Anchor to our school **6th-9th May 2025** as part of this significant event. Mrs Allmand and Mrs Gerschler will attend Diocesan meetings to ensure St Damian's fully embraces the year's celebrations.

St Damian's RC Science College

Lees Road
Ashton-under-Lyne
OL6 8BH

Tel: 0161 330 5974

Fax: 0161 331 4744

Email: admin@stdamians.co.uk

Web: <http://www.stdamians.co.uk/>

Follow us on Twitter: @SIDamiansRCSC

Follow us on Facebook

Headteacher

Mr S Logue BA (Hons), MEd., NPQH, NPQEL

St. Damian's RC Science College

- A great example of Service. We are incredibly proud of Elijah Nathaniel, a Yr8 student who volunteered over the festive period with Urban Outreach Bolton's "Christmas Dinner on Jesus" initiative. Elijah helped distribute over 2,000 Christmas food parcels to more than 6,500 people, starting his day at 5:30 am and working tirelessly to help others. This involved an early 5.30am start and heavy lifting but it was great to help out the community, Elijah is a true ambassador for St Damian's, living out our Catholic values of love and service. Well done, Elijah!



Safeguarding Update: Child Substance Misuse

At the start of this month, Mrs Brophy trained our staff on child substance misuse. Staff were made aware of the signs of substance misuse and the impact it has on learning. Furthermore, Mrs Brophy delivered assemblies on this topic and how to report concerns and what to do if they need support, either internally or from external professionals. I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate our safeguarding mantra that 'it could happen here' and in fact, it does happen here. I ask that parents keep an eye on any changes in your child's behaviour which may be an indication of substance misuse.

Additionally, I urge parents to look at their children's social media posts as I have dealt with students who have posted images of themselves with or around drugs. If we are ever alerted to these posts, we will inform you as parents. I am also using this newsletter to clearly inform you that if your child is found to have illegal substances/paraphernalia on their person or indeed be under the influence in school then their place at St Damian's is at serious risk. If you have any concerns regarding this topic, please contact a Student Support Officer and/or familiarise yourself with the following websites;

- <https://www.barnardos.org.uk/get-support/support-for-parents-and-carers/child-abuse-and-harm/alcohol-and-other-drug-misuse>
- <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/young-person/coping-with-life/drugs-and-alcohol/>
- <https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/what-we-do/our-work/substance-misuse>

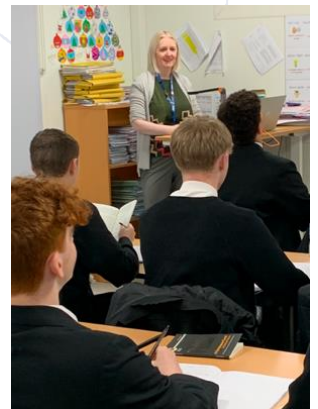
Can I stress how important it is that parents look out for signs of substance misuse as when I speak to some parents, it is obvious that they don't know what to keep an eye open for.

Safeguarding Update: 'Use of Social Media'

Increasingly across the country there are more and more issues with the 'abuse' of Social Media. The community of St Damian's is not immune to this. An example of this is where students are posting pictures of themselves **outside** of school using drugs or brandishing weapons. Indeed, I have spoken to several parents regarding this. It is important that parents know what their children are doing on their phones in their social time. As a school we constantly educate children on a range of 'difficult' topics and the dangers of drugs or weapons. For clarity, if any child brings drugs or weapons into school, they are likely to permanently excluded.

Teaching and Learning Update

At this stage in the Teaching and Learning Cycle, all teachers have been formally observed and given written feedback via their line manager. By monitoring Teaching and Learning at St Damian's, Senior Leaders can ensure that we continue to provide quality education by actively engaging students in their learning, ensuring we are motivating them, imparting knowledge, skills and values that enable students to become lifelong learners. Teachers are also in the process of conducting their own pedagogical research, through dedicated CPD time to ensure we are at the forefront of new initiatives, new technologies and new teaching methods to continue to support our pupils to thrive. I am delighted to say that the quality of teaching at St Damian's is outstanding, as reflected by our sustained outstanding GCSE outcomes each year.



Children's Mental Health Week

This year St Damian's will be proudly supporting Children's Mental Health Week created by Place 2 Be between 3rd and 9th February. The theme this year is 'know yourself, grow yourself' and will focus on young people understanding that it's OK to just be themselves rather than conforming to expectations. During the week our students will have the opportunity to explore the importance of self-awareness and understand how expressing

their emotions in an acceptable manner will allow them to develop. I look forward to sharing some of the highlights in my February newsletter.

Safer Internet Day

St Damian's will be taking part in 'Safer Internet' Day 2025. Supported by the Computer Science Department, our students will be educated through a range of activities, lessons and in lessons warning them about the many dangers of the internet. This will take place around the 11th of February 2025. Safer Internet Day is the UK's biggest event to raise awareness of online safety. Each year, a theme covers an issue that educates children on keeping safe. The theme this year is '**Too good to be true? Protecting yourself and others from scams online**', with a focus focusing on how to protect themselves from scams.



Mobile Phone Ambassadors



At the end of last half term, six Yr10 students attended a unique training course in collaboration with the GMP school engagement officers and the Cyber Crime unit at Tameside police station. Students learnt about how safe their data is online and that we must be updating passwords and security features in our digital lives to avoid being a target for Cyber Crime. They took part in an 'escape room' style game which tested their ethical hacking skills and ability to crack codes. They had 30 minutes to complete the task, using clues, padlocks and passwords to prove the innocence of the police officer! St Damians students

managed this in 21 minutes, beating Fairfield School for Girls and Laurus Ryecroft on the day to be the fastest school to complete the challenge. 😊 The students will now be able to share their knowledge on mobile phone safety and provide handy tips to avoid being a victim of online fraud. They were also treated to a VIP ride in the Police van down to the station and got to pick from the police tuck shop as a well done for their exceptional behaviour.



Yr11 Update

It is important that parents take interest in their child's education over the next few months. Arguably, their GCSE exams are the **most** important that they will take as these largely decide what students can, and can't, do post 16 and, indeed for the rest of their lives. Below are some 'updates' that you should be aware of.

- **Mocks.** Yr11 students have had their Mock exam results back a few weeks ago. I hope that parents have spoken to their child regarding these. As I have said before, parents supporting the school and taking an interest in their child's assessments is key. Note that on St Damian's day, 14th February, students will be sitting further Mock exams in English and Maths.
- **Intervention.** This started a few weeks ago and will continue right up to the week before the GCSE exams begin. This is an excellent opportunity for your child to boost their GCSE grades. I ask that parents support this initiative.

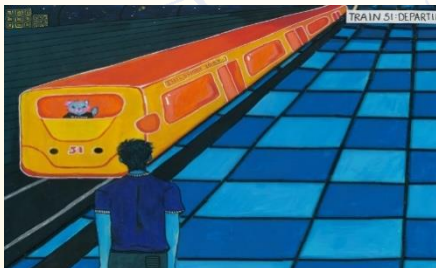
	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri
8.00am- 8.50am			MFL	RE- X Band Hist/Geog - Y band	Option Subjects
3.10pm-4:10pm	RE- Y Band Hist/Geog- Band	Maths	MFL	English	Science

- **Revision sessions at half term:** Some teachers are putting on revision sessions during the half term.

Date	Time	Teacher	Subject
Mon 17th Feb	9:30am -11:30am	Mrs Baynham	Chemistry 11x1
	12:noon -2:00pm	Mrs Baynham	Science 11y1
	9:30am – 11:30am	Ms Joyce	Science 11x2
	12: noon-2:00pm	Ms Joyce	Biology 11x1
	9:30am -11:30am	Dr Robinson	Science 11x3
Tues 18 th Feb	9:00am – 2:00pm	Mr McHugh	History
Fri 21 st Feb		Mr Gregory	History

- **Key to Success [K2S] Groups:** Since January, we have refigured our forms to ensure targeted intervention for students to achieve better grades in English and Maths. During form time, three times a week students will be doing 'extra' Maths and English. An extra form has been created to support the creation of these targeted forms. Students not in a K2S form will have time to revise independently.

- **Externally Set Assignment Update.** Yr11 Art students have started work on their Externally Set Assignment



(ESA). Over the next three months, they will explore their ideas in a sketchbook before completing their final piece after Easter in 10 hours of supervised time. To achieve their targets, it is essential students are using checklists and exemplar materials to help them meet homework deadlines. Parental support in encouraging their focus and organisation during this important time will be invaluable. An example of final piece of ESA work from Vinnie Burrows, a student in last year's Yr11.

- **GCSE Music:** Students recently took part in a dedicated NEA recording day, finalising their performance submissions for their coursework. The day provided a focused and supportive environment for students to showcase their hard work and musical talents, with a fantastic range of performances across different styles and instruments. From expressive solo pieces to well-rehearsed ensemble performances, students demonstrated impressive technical skill and musicality. Their dedication and preparation were evident, and we are incredibly proud of the high standard they achieved. A huge well done to all involved!
- **Free passes to the Prom.** Each month, I will be doing several raffles for a free ticket to the Prom. Students will be rewarded simply for working hard and making great effort and/or progress and not for simply being the highest academically as this would be unfair. Thus, far, FOUR free tickets have been awarded. The children who have received are Ciara Postlethwaite [*Highest attainer in Mocks*], Stuart Edwards [*Most progress*], Ava Matthews [*Most improved from Autumn progress check*] and Ruby Morrell [*Chosen in a raffle from positive teacher feedback*]. Well done. Each month I will pick a child's name from a raffle for a free ticket.
- **Attendance.** You have heard it before, but it is worth reiterating again and again and again! 😊 Attendance is a pre-requisite for effective learning. It is a fact that students with good regular attendance, achieve the best academically, but also socially. Attendance of Yr11 since the first school day in September is 93.7%. I ask that parents make every effort to ensure that their child attends. A reminder that if attendance is not good enough, your child's invitation to the Prom will be withdrawn. This has been made clear to the students. I am pleased to say that 32 students have 100% attendance, and this is fantastic!
- **Independent Study.** Last week I was speaking to all the Subject Leaders in school focusing on the Mocks. One of the biggest issues or barriers to each individual child achieving their potential is the lack of **independent work at home**. It is vital that parents ensure their child is doing 2-3 hours **EACH** night. I can't stress the importance of this.
- **A Note from Mrs Forde, HOY11.** It has been a very busy few months for Yr11 and I am really impressed with their attitude and resilience. There were some fantastic grades achieved in the recent Mocks, which reflect their hard work and talent. It is essential that all students continue to work hard both in school and with independent study in order to reach their full potential. I have reviewed a number of college applications

recently too and it is great to see the wide range of aspirations our students have. I wish them all the best with their final few months at St Damian's – time is really flying past!

Please note date of the FINAL Yr11 Parent's Evening is Wednesday 26th March.

I ask that you make every effort to attend.

Yr10 Update

Yr10 have now completed a full term of their GCSE courses. Although the vast majority understand the importance of these 2 year courses, there are a number of students who have not yet grasped their importance. For clarity, their GCSE exams will largely determine **what they can, and what they can't** do after they leave school. Maximising their GCSEs will ensure that they have a wider range of courses and opportunities post -16. I can't stress the importance of working hard this year as a springboard for commencing Yr11. Below are some key messages for parents and students alike.

- **Progress Checks.** You should have received your child's most recent progress check. This will give an indication of how your child is progressing in school. I trust that you have spoken to your child regarding these. It is important to understand that GCSEs are linear exams and the learning now is part of their preparations for their GCSE exams at the end of year 11.
- **GCSE targets.** Targets have now been set that are aspirational, yet realistic, and designed to motivate students to achieve their best potential. I ask that you discuss these targets with your child. Please note that these targets will be reviewed in Yr11 and adjusted if necessary to reflect progress and individual circumstances.
- **Attendance.** The attendance of Yr10 since the first school day in September is 93.7%, attendance should be at least 97%. I am pleased to say that 26 students have 100% attendance, and this is fantastic! As in all years, it is crucial that attendance is at least good as this is a **major factor** in the determination of GCSE success/outcomes.

A reminder that the Yr10 Parents' Evening is on Wednesday 12th February. Please make every effort to attend.

Yr9 Options

This is an exciting time for Yr9 as they prepare to choose their GCSE subjects. This milestone marks the beginning of an important phase in their education, allowing them to tailor their learning to suit their strengths, interests, and future aspirations. Mrs Kelly will be launching the Options process after February half-term with a range of activities including assemblies and taster sessions. This will be followed by an informative Options Evening, led by Mrs Kelly, which will take place on **Thursday 20th March at 6pm.** I look forward to seeing you on the evening so that you can understand the process, it's an opportunity to ask questions and allows you to support your child at this very important juncture.

Yr 8 Parents' Evening

Again, this evening was a huge success. It really is great to see a real buzz in the school hall with happy students, staff and parents. 😊 This was reflected in the questionnaire returns. 116 said they would recommend the school. One parent did not tick the box [may have missed it] and one parent said not sure. Sadly, this parent did not put the name on the sheet and, therefore, I can't speak to the parent. However, despite not recommending the school, most of the responses were positive. **All** comments are on the school web site ([click here](#)) but some of these I highlight below for your perusal. Thank you. I enjoyed reading the comments and sharing them with staff.

"We feel that St Damian's will play an important role in developing our child 😊"

"I will only say I cannot thank you enough for all your support you are giving to my son"

*"We appreciate the outstanding quality of teaching on offer and the pastoral care support our son receives.
THANK YOU"*

"We are very grateful for the genuine care and support shown to XXX since Year 7. It has made the transition to your school a very positive experience. Thank you"

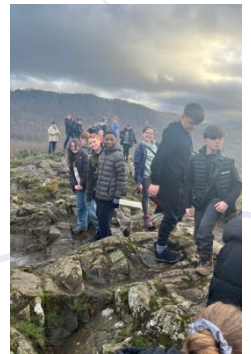
"We feel very lucky that XXX attends such an amazing school with amazing teachers"

"This is a brilliant school. Thank you to all the teachers who work tirelessly to help the students reach their potential"

Yr 7 Retreat to the Lake District



Nearly 30 Yr7 children enjoyed a school retreat with 3 fabulous days at Castlerigg. The students reflected on how they could grow their relationship with God and with each other. They embraced their climb to the top of 'Castlehead' where they were literally that high that they were closer to God. A huge thank you to the 3 staff that gave up their time to take the students on retreat, Miss Joyce, Mrs Harrison and Mr Bridge. I know the students appreciated their kindness and I hope that the students have great



memories of this trip. The staff at the retreat commented about how respectful our students were and how well they engaged with all the activities. One student said, *"Each day was something different and we loved exploring the town with my friends"*. The students and staff always enjoy looking at the retreat photos at the leavers' assembly in Yr11. It always gets a great cheer!

Fundraising Spotlight – Be a Supporter!

As you know, supporting charities has always been at the heart of St Damian's. Recently, I have been made aware of two very worthwhile causes which need our support. I ask that, if possible, you could donate, big or small to these worthy causes. Thanks in advance for your generosity.

- *Abi Torkington*, a parent of children at St Damian's is raising money for St Christopher's Church Building Repairs Fund. Abi, and her daughters have set a goal of raising £10,000 towards the repair funds of our local parish church and central hub in our community by completing 100 miles in 20 days; a very difficult feat for Abi who has a long-term disability. St Damian's have donated £1,000 towards Abi's target and ask that you please support her in reaching her goal by donating via her [JustGiving](#) page . Thanks in advance.
- *Sam Lomas*, a past pupil, is now studying Geography at University of Manchester. He has recently signed up to climb Mount Kilimanjaro to raise money for a charity '[Dig Deep](#)' who transform the lives of people in East Africa by helping them to realise their fundamental right to clean water. Sam aims to raise £3,000 for this worthwhile cause and he will be competing in the Greater Manchester run alongside climbing the '3 peaks'. St Damian's wish him all the very best in his efforts and we have donated £300 towards is fundraising total. You can help to support Sam directly via his [JustGiving](#) page. Thanks in advance.

Another Award: Young Carers.

St Damian's has just been awarded the '*Young Carers in Schools*' Award in recognition for their work to make sure our students don't miss out on an education because they have a caring role in the family home. At St Damian's we recognise that being a young carer can have a significant impact on a young person's life, and we work hard to identify young carers to ensure they are both supported and valued. We constantly strive to improve the support they receive, both in school and in the community, to enable them to be safe, secure and successful now and in their future lives. A massive thanks to Mrs Harrison who works tirelessly to ensure that our young carers thrive at St Damian's. Here is a picture of her with the school award.



Spotlight on Roxy McHugh, Yr10



Roxy made her first final of the Northern athletics indoor championships in the 300m under 17 girls event. This is her first year in a new age group and despite this challenge, she managed to navigate a very tough three rounds and achieved a very hard fought silver medal in a very competitive final.



In the Welsh National indoor championships in Cardiff, Roxy took part in her second event which is the under 17 girls 60 m hurdles. She competed against some strong athletes and again came away with a bronze medal. Roxy trains and competes for sale Harriers Manchester. Her next major championship is the England indoor athletics championships in Sheffield on February 8/9th where she will test herself against the best athletes in the country.

Yr10 English Trip to The Lowry

I had the pleasure, alongside Mrs Butterworth and Mrs Toole, to take a group of Yr10 students to The Lowry on Thursday 16th January to see a matinee performance of JB Priestley's 'An Inspector Calls'. This remarkable performance, directed by Stephen Daldry, was a revelation to our students and it was a joy to witness their appreciation of this GCSE Literature text. It was an absolute pleasure to share this experience with these children.



The conduct of all our students was impeccable. Two members of staff from the venue approached us to complement our students for their exemplary conduct and behaviour. In fact, one of them said "I have to say that your school was the best behaved in the whole auditorium". It was great to hear these lovely comments. I told this to the children, and I could feel how proud they were! Great to see and hear.

Pastoral Themes Update

In the last 2 half terms we explored the themes of 'Aspirations' and 'Respect & Diversity'. This half term we are looking at 'Staying Safe'. As part of this, students will discuss how the decisions they make, may impact on their safety. Whilst we are unable to eliminate all 'risk' from our lives, there are things that we can teach our children to consider, before making key decisions. Form groups may also decide to focus in one aspect of staying safe such as, 'Online Safety', 'Safety in relationships' or being 'Street safe'. Educating our students on many of the issues they may potentially face is an important aspect of providing the holistic education that we subscribe to.

D of E Update:

The Duke of Edinburgh programme at St Damian's is now in full swing: students have been registered onto the D of E website and are beginning to upload evidence for each of their sections; many of our fantastic staff have also volunteered their own time to support the delivery of the expeditions.

Options Evening: Please come along to options evening on the 20th March, Ms. Hughes will be there to give out key information about how D of E works and answer any of your questions.

Please put the following dates for the expeditions in your diaries:

- Silver Practice Expedition – Thursday 15th May 2025 (Evening) – Saturday 17th May 2025 (Day) Location: School Field
- Silver Expedition – Thursday 12th – Saturday 14th June 2025 Location: [Gradbach](#) Scout Camp.
- Bronze Expedition – 10th/11th July Location: [Linnet Clough](#) Scout Camp.

Reading for pleasure... at the heart of a great education



I am delighted to share some new books and posters in our beautiful Literacy Hub. Historical fiction author, Tom Palmer, sent St Damian's some wonderful posters and bookmarks to accompany his wonderful texts. These are displayed proudly amongst our bookshelves. Some Yr7 students have had the pleasure of reading and reviewing some of these texts in their library lesson, both in text and e-book forms by viewing excerpts from Tom's author website and our online reading platform, SORA. We hope to see students making excellent use of these fantastic resources. We would love to welcome students into our Literacy Hub to loan these special signed editions or read these texts on the go for free through SORA! Many thanks again to Tom Palmer!

Staff Profile

In this month's newsletter I have decided to profile 2 members of staff who do a great job supporting our students. They both do a tremendous job, know the students well and add value to our already exceptional pastoral care.

- Mrs Hunter, Student Support Officer/Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead. Mrs Hunter wrote the following. "In September 2024 I celebrated my anniversary of 20 years at St Damian's which has flown by so quickly and as the saying goes, "time flies when you are having fun. I started my career working for Tameside Children's Social Care. However, in 1990 I became an overseas holiday Children's Rep for Thomson

holidays. I worked in family hotels in Ibiza, Tenerife, Costa Del Sol and Rhodes for 6 years, which gave me amazing opportunities to travel and gain valuable life experiences. When I came back to the UK, I had several job roles including managing a private day nursery, working in Children's homes and an Education Welfare Officer. In 2005 I had the opportunity to work at St Damian's. It was a new role as a Student Support Officer and I have not looked back since! I love coming to work, it is my vocation. I support many students who may be struggling emotionally. I build their confidence, self-esteem and resilience. I love working with such a fantastic staff team who all support one another and work together for the best outcomes for our pupils and families".

- *Mrs Harrison, Student Support Officer/Head of Year 7/Young Carers Lead.* Mrs Harrison wrote the following. "Since joining the St Damian's family in 2007, I have held several different roles in school. Beginning with the role of Cover Supervisor and then in 2014 I became the Inclusion Manager of the Ambrose and Seclusion suite. After St Damian's supported me in gaining my counselling qualification, I was promoted to the role of Student Support Officer. Then in 2022 I began my current role as Progress and Pastoral Manager which incorporates the Head of Year position along with my Student Support Officer role. I cannot put into words how much I enjoy coming to work each day, support young people and helping them to navigate their life paths is so rewarding. Being part of an amazing community is a blessing and a privilege which makes coming to work each day a dream".

Staff BeeWell



Always a Bright Monday at St Damian's!

At St Damian's, we don't do Blue Mondays – we brighten them instead! Monday 20th January 2025 – Blue Monday, staff kicked off the day with a **grab-and-go breakfast**, spreading positivity and energy to start the week on the right foot. From small acts of kindness to setting exciting goals, we're turning January into a month of motivation and community spirit.

Staff Embrace the BEE Weighed 13-Week Challenge!

Our staff have enthusiastically joined the BEE Weighed 13-week challenge, promoting healthier lifestyles through balanced eating and mindful habits. This initiative is all about encouraging positive changes, supporting one another, and setting an example for our students. Let's cheer them on as they work towards their goals! I must admit, I'm very competitive and have my sights set on winning this challenge!



Couch to 5K: Staff on the Move!

Many of our staff have started the Couch to 5K program, taking steps—literally—towards better fitness! Whether walking or running, this initiative is helping build confidence and endurance, with the ultimate goal of participating in the Manchester 10K in May. We encourage more staff to join in, get active, and enjoy the benefits of regular exercise while working towards an inspiring milestone together! If you see us out training, please give us a wave—we'd love your support!

Celebrating the Year of the Snake!

To mark Chinese New Year and the Year of the Snake, all staff were gifted a fortune cookie as a small gesture of appreciation. We hope this little treat brought a smile to their faces and a touch of good fortune to their day! Let's embrace the positive energy and opportunities this new year brings.



Training future History Teachers

As you are aware, St Damian's is a school that trains potential teachers. We are really proud of this, and we have successfully trained many teachers over the years in a range of subjects. Before the Christmas break, we received an email from the PGCE History lead at the University of Manchester. This email was to recognise the work that the History department continue to do to ensure prospective teachers have the best possible start to their careers in teaching. An extract from the email said "St Damian's is right up there with the best schools I have worked with [and I have worked with a lot] – and that is largely due to yourselves and the outstanding support you provide. Absolutely top-tier". I am delighted to share this with you, again showcasing the work of the great History teachers at St Damian's.

Careers Update

This term is very busy for our Careers provision. Our Yr10 students have a fantastic opportunity to get inspired about their future, visiting the National Apprenticeship and Careers event in the Salford Community Stadium on 13th March. This will allow them to learn about apprenticeships and the educational pathways available to them. We have a number of students visiting Corpus Christi Oxford at the very start of February. This great experience will give an insight into what University life is like and demonstrate how ambition twinned with hard work can lead you to very exciting career prospects.

It is important students hear from a variety of different careers and pathways for their futures. We would like to hear from any parents or if you know of anyone you think would be interested in delivering careers talk to our students. They would need to be confident speaking to students, be able to take some time off work and talk about their profession and their job. This would take place during *National Careers Week*, Monday 3rd – Friday 8th March. If you would like to volunteer, please contact Mr Healey at school.

School Buses

As you are aware, the school bus service has been taken over by Bee Network. As with a lot of change there have been some teething problems, but can I assure you that St Damian's have been in contact with Bee Network expressing our dissatisfaction with the way the service has begun. The school bus service is out of our control and all we can do is email their customer services or ring the generic helpline. Could I please ask that if you would like to make any comments regarding the school bus service that you contact them directly via email on hello@beenetwork.com or call them on 0161 244 1000 rather than contacting school. Thanks in advance.

Parent Governor

There is a vacancy on the full Governing Board for a Parent Governor and details will follow shortly. In the meantime, if you are interested, please contact Mrs Biggs on admin@stdamians.co.uk

Upcoming Dates

- Tuesday 11th February - Safer Internet Day 2025
- Tuesday 11th February @ 5:pm - Parental Meeting for those going on the London trip at Easter
- Wednesday 12th February – Yr10 Parents Evening 4:00pm – 7:00pm
- Friday 14th February Aspire day & Last Day of Term
- Monday 24th February – Return to School
- Wednesday 26th February – Yr9 Parents Evening 4:00pm – 7:00pm

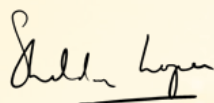
And finally... the St Damian's staff

Can I say that the staff at St Damian's are amazing. They work *tirelessly for your* children to create a school community that can truly be called outstanding in every sense. Their standards and expectations that they have set are exceptional. Every 'performance' indicator is really strong. This includes sustained excellent GCSE outcomes, outstanding teaching and exceptional pastoral care. I am extremely proud of what they do on a daily basis. I say that with great authority as I visit other schools and speak to many Headteachers.

However, the staff at St Damian's don't work in a vacuum. They need support from parents. A small number of parents think that it is acceptable to 'shout' at my staff and/or question their integrity and professionalism. This 'abuse' of the great staff at St Damian's is totally unacceptable. A smaller number of parents readily 'blame' the hard-working staff here for issues that have nothing to do with them and need to take responsibility for what their children do outside of school. This includes ensuring that they are not using illegal substances, knowing what your child is doing and checking on their social media. Leaders at St Damian's **always** put your child first but your child must also take responsibility for their actions.

Thank you for your continued support which is overwhelming support.

Kind regards



Mr Logue
Headteacher