



In all things faithful

October 2024

Dear Parents and Carers

A warm welcome to my October newsletter to share all the great news of the St Damian's community. This half term has flown past, but it has been another great half term for both students and staff. I trust that you will enjoy reading 'all things' St Damian's in this newsletter.

### Catholic Life of the School

As always, the Catholic life of the school is thriving!

✓ *Chapel Assemblies.* These take place every day in the Chapel at the heart of the school. It provides a very special and reverent place to pray and we are fortunate to have The Blessed sacrament in our tabernacle. This term we have explored themes such as 'Who is Jesus to you?' and 'The Cry of the Earth and the Cry of the Poor', drawing inspiration from the Gospel. Our form tutors have become experts at encouraging our students to deepen their faith, sharing their personal reflections and allowing space for all to participate.

✓ *Rosary.* Sister Roseline has taken the lead with the Rosary for October and has been teaching the Rosary to our students and staff. October, the Month of the Holy Rosary, has been a wonderful opportunity to teach our students the beauty and significance of this prayer. We have invited everyone to join in this powerful form of meditation on the lives of Jesus and Mary. Our staff Rosary was a quiet moment to gather and be present in the moment. A sense of calm was created after a busy day.



✓ *Year 7 Bibles.* Good News For Everyone attended a Yr7 assembly and shared Good News Bibles with them. Yr7 were excited to receive their own Bible, helping them on their journey of faith. These bibles serve as a foundation for their spiritual education throughout their time at St Damian's and will be useful in their RE lessons. We encourage them to read the passages and reflect on the meanings for their own lives.

✓ *Key Stage Three RE.* This term in RE, we've explored a range of thought-provoking topics, connecting our faith to real-world issues. Students have engaged deeply in their learning, asking critical questions and growing in their understanding of Catholic teaching. We have set half term projects for KS3. Yr7 will be focussing on Stewardship, Yr 8 will be delving into the lives of Conscientious objectors and Yr9 will be studying The Beatitudes.

✓ *CAFOD Update.* On Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> October we invited CAFOD to school to lead a Workshop. Our students will have the privilege of participating in a CAFOD workshop this term and will use their leadership skills to organise an event for St Damian's to support in the future. This workshop helped them understand the importance of global social justice and the Church's mission to care for the poor and vulnerable. It was an inspiring and eye-opening experience for all involved.



✓ *Masses.* Our whole school Masses for Yr8, 9 and 10 have been spiritually uplifting. These moments of collective worship allow us to come together as one family of faith, celebrating our beliefs and the love of Christ. Fr Jude takes care to guide our students through the Mass, with patience and

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St. Damian's RC Science College

care so that all feel welcome and included. Our GIFT team led the readings with confidence and all participated. A massive thank you to our St Damian's Choir who set the tone for the Mass with their uplifting hymns.

- ✓ *Chaplaincy.* Mrs Allmand attended a meeting with Salford Diocese Leaders in Chaplaincy which offered valuable insights and resources to support the spiritual life of our school. The Diocese have created weekly PowerPoint presentations designed for Form Time liturgies. We are encouraged to prepare for the 'Year of the Jubilee' and we are exploring ways to mark this important time in the Church such as Jubilee-themed RE lessons and Welcoming the Diocese's traveling Anchor!
- ✓ *Prayer and Liturgy Directory.* I am pleased to report we are in line with the diocesan goal by working towards fully implementing the new Prayer and Liturgy Directory by September 2025, ensuring our provision, progression, and inclusion are aligned with this initiative.
- ✓ *Caritas.* Finally, the Salford Caritas Advent Campaign starts on the 12<sup>th</sup> November. Our school will be supporting and encouraging our community to participate and contribute to the gift list as we prepare to share the joy of Advent with those in need.

**The Carol Service** will take place on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> December at 6:pm – This is a wonderful occasion to reflect on the true meaning of Christmas, many staff bring their families for this wonderful community event and we would love to see you there as well.



### Yr9 Visit to Reuben's Retreat After Share Day Success

We are delighted to announce that students from the Yr9 form who raised the most money during Share Day were invited on a special visit to *Reuben's Retreat*. During their visit, they proudly presented a fundraising cheque for £1,445 in support of the incredible work the charity does. This charity offers practical and emotional support to families and our students were truly inspired and moved by the charity's work and the wonderful facilities they were shown. A heartfelt thank you to the Reuben's Retreat team for taking the time to meet with our students and provide such an insightful tour.



The total raised on Share Day was an incredible **£5,782.57** which will be distributed equally among our other Share Day charities: *Willow Wood Hospice*, *Cancer Research UK*, and *Charcot-Marie-Tooth UK*. We will be visiting *Willow Wood Hospice* on **Tuesday, 26th November 2024** for the cheque presentation, followed by the *Garden of Lights*, where our school choir will be performing. More details to follow. If you are able to offer any support to these remarkable charities, please visit Reuben's Retreat and the other charity websites to explore ways to donate or get involved. Thank you to everyone who contributed to our Share Day efforts—your generosity is truly making a difference!

### Safeguarding

Mrs Brophy also delivered assemblies to all years with the theme being 'Child Exploitation'. This is an issue that has the potential to **affect any child in any year**. In fact, at the time of writing there was a serious incident involving a student from St Damian's whereby they have been unknowingly exploited. This is being dealt with by the police. This is proof, if needed, that **ALL** parents must be aware of their child's location, friendship groups and activities on and off-line. Key messages in Mrs Brophy's

assemblies were that all young people are 'vulnerable' to exploitation and that it can and does happen to the children at St Damian's. If you wish to report a concern, we are promoting fearless.org, a method of anonymously sharing information with the relevant authorities <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ssXIZ51f5nl>. If you wish to discuss any concerns with school contact the main office and ask for a call from the safeguarding team. Thanks for looking at this video. Safeguarding is the number one priority for all staff at St Damian's.

**Yr 11 Update**



✓ *Yr11 Sport Tech.* This cohort recently took part in their practical sport coaching assessment as part of their exam. Their role was to be a sports coach of an activity of their choice. They had to perform a warm-up, skill development and a conditioned game. All coaches were well planned, eager and very patient with the Yr8 groups that they had to teach. The Yr8s had a fantastic morning being coached, at one point singing the coaches names in appreciation of a fun and rewarding session. Well done Yr11. Now it is time to work equally as hard on the theory aspects of the course to ensure that you fulfil your potential!

✓ *Yr11 Mock Exams.* These begin on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> December. To prepare, students should be revising regularly, focusing on key topics, and practicing past papers. It is important that they come to school on time, with all necessary equipment, and ready to give their best effort. Your support in ensuring they are fully prepared is very much appreciated. Students will be provided with revision lists and an exam timetable prior to the examinations starting.



✓ *Geography Field Trip.* A few weeks ago, the Yr 11 geography cohort went to Salford Quays to conduct their 'human' fieldwork. The students engaged in hands-on learning as part of their GCSE course on urban regeneration. They carried out a people count and created a detailed land use map, allowing them to analyse the area's transformation and its impacts on the community. This practical experience not only enhanced their understanding of urban change but also fostered critical thinking and observational skills. They will be required to use this knowledge of the fieldwork process to answer exam questions in the Paper 3 exam, which will be undertaken in the summer of 2025.

✓ *Key Dates.* Your child will now have completed formal assessment across all subjects. Next half term is the formal Parents' Evening on **Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> November** and Mock exams begin on the **2<sup>nd</sup> December** for 2 weeks. Your child should be revising at least 2 hours each night to prepare for these.

✓ *Half Term Revision.* During half term there are a limited number of opportunities for students to work with teachers. Students will be told if they are to attend. I ask parents to support us by ensuring your child attends.

Date	Time	Teacher	Subject
Tues 29 <sup>th</sup> October	9:00am – 12 noon	MJE	11X2 Combined Science
Wed 30 <sup>th</sup> October	9:30 – 12 noon 12 noon – 2:30pm	SDO	Food Technology Construction
Thurs 31 <sup>st</sup> October	9:am – 2:30pm	LGY	History

✓ *Attendance.* Remember my key message; good attendance is key to your child achieving their potential. Currently, Yr11 attendance is 94.6%. This is below what I would expect/want for students who are sitting their GCSE exams in a few months.

### Assemblies

Earlier this month I delivered an assembly to all students in Yrs7 - 10. These assemblies focused on why "St Damian's is a 'great' school". Topics included our exceptional pastoral care, reinforcing our fair rules, the range of student leadership opportunities available and being part of a strong and united catholic community. My expectations of the children were made clear, and the students were told that leaders are here to serve this community where children are at its heart. The assemblies were well received by the students, and I hope that it raised their aspirations and understand that we are all here to support. The Yr7 ended their assembly by singing a rendition of our school hymn: it made my day! 😊



### Open Evening



Early in October we opened our doors to prospective parents. As an outstanding place of learning, we expected it to be busy. And we weren't disappointed! Over 500 families visited the school and the evening was a resounding success. Our visitors saw an outstanding catholic community and I was very proud of both the students and staff and the manner in which they 'showcased' this great community. Feedback from the evening said that our great children were "delightful", "very polite and helpful" and "exceptional behaviour and welcoming" and the staff were described as "very reassuring", "very impressed and informative"

and "it was lovely to see all of my old teachers and introduce them to my brother". After the open evening, I led several tours of the school during the 'working day'. There was a great turnout and they were not disappointed. They witnessed a strong catholic community with a focus on purposeful learning in a safe, welcoming environment. Sadly, we are a heavily over-subscribed school and there will be many disappointed parents and children.

### Staff Profiles

This month the staff profile focuses on 2 subject leaders of core subjects.

- ✓ *Mrs Turbatu, Head of English.* This academic year marks my 15<sup>th</sup> year here as part of the St Damian's community and during that time, as you can imagine, I have witnessed a number of significant changes. I have worked in different classrooms, different buildings, for different Headteachers and with different colleagues - some of whom have gone to pastures new and some of whom I still work closely with, which is really special. Reflecting on these many changes, I realised that the one thing that has never changed at St Damian's are our fantastic students. They are what makes doing this job such a privilege.
- ✓ *Mrs Baynham, Head of Science.* I have been part of the St Damian's community for 10 years, and in 2023, I was honoured to be appointed Head of the Science Department. Teaching has always been my calling. Although I initially worked as a surfactant chemist after completing my degree, I quickly realised that my true passion was education. I trained in Cardiff and qualified as a teacher in 2005. After moving to Manchester, I began my teaching career in a school in Stockport. I was then lucky enough to join St Damian's in 2014 as the Key Stage 4 Science Lead. From day one, it has been a truly rewarding journey. I am fortunate to work with an incredible team of colleagues, and the students at St Damian's make every day a joy. Their enthusiasm and energy continue to inspire me, and I am proud to be part of their learning journey.

### Training Future Teachers

The English Faculty were delighted to recently host 12 English PGCE trainees. The trainees observed high quality teaching and learning in the English Faculty and then prepared their own lessons for a return visit. Our students thoroughly enjoyed the experience of being taught by them two weeks later and the English Faculty is delighted to be supporting one of the trainees, Hafsa, on her first teaching placement. We wish them every success in the coming year and are proud to be part of the community helping to develop the next generation of English teachers.



### Pastoral Theme, Half Term One



Each half term form tutors in Yrs7 -10 explore a 'Pastoral Theme' with their students. This half term students have focussed on the theme of 'Aspirations' and why it is important that we all have aspirations. They have set themselves short, medium and long-term goals which could be personal or academic. Students will review their progress against these goals in the final summer term. Form group, 10SMH have been hard at work practicing

their assembly on aspirations. The students have recorded conversations between themselves discussing their aspirations for the future, writing prayers and poems about their hopes, and even a rap song! They showcased their work in an assembly to the whole year group on Tuesday 22nd October.

### Parental Presentation Evenings

This month we have had another 2 parental information evenings, Yr10 and Yr8. These are a great opportunity to impart key messages and important information, as well as a formal opportunity to ask questions or raise any issues.

#### Yr10 Key Messages on Parental Information Evening

- ✓ *Attendance.* There is a strong correlation between excellent attendance and excellent results. I ask for parents' support in ensuring high levels of attendance for your child.
- ✓ *Revision techniques.* Lots of advice on the best ways to revise. Your child is on a KS4 course now and every lesson is important and lots of information needs to be remembered and recalled.
- ✓ *Upcoming dates.* Student class assessment begins the week commencing 25<sup>th</sup> November and the Y10 mock exams beginning 21<sup>st</sup> April.

#### Yr8 Key Messages on Parental Information Evening

- ✓ *Transition.* From Yr7 to Yr8 and becoming more *independent* in terms of learning and organisation
- ✓ *Curriculum.* Students in Yr8 have a broad and balanced curriculum across a broad range of subjects
- ✓ *Homework.* The importance of this to embed learning from the classroom and enrich understanding through personal study
- ✓ *Holistic education.* Highlighting the importance of holistic development where a healthy child performs well, including anxiety, self-harm, vaping and exploitation

### STEM Trip to Loreto Sixth Form and Nando's

Our fantastic Yr10 STEM Leaders and Y11 Separate Science Physics students enjoyed tea at Nando's followed by a fascinating lecture on Solar Flares organised by the Institute of Physics at Loreto Sixth Form College. The lecture was given by Professor Phillipa Browning, Professor of Astrophysics at Jodrell Bank Centre for Astrophysics and the University of Manchester. The students loved learning about the structure of the Sun and how its magnetic field is linked to the activity at its surface.



Three students took the opportunity to ask the speaker questions in front of the audience. Their questions focused on the possible dangers of solar flares, the potential to pre-empt and counter them with planned explosions and whether solar flares could reduce our ionosphere. Dr Robinson, who leads the STEM ambassadors said *"The focus of all the students was exceptional. I was so impressed by their enthusiasm and willingness to ask questions. Professor Browning was able to satisfy their curiosity and I was so proud to see our pupils interacting with such a brilliant speaker and expert in the field of Astrophysics"*.

**BeeWell Survey**

Over the last few weeks, Yr7 and Y11 students have completed the BeeWell questionnaire. This survey is designed to measure the well-being of adolescents. Once completed, our school will be provided with collective information about how our students feel about their prospects, career opportunities, social habits and their mental health. In response to the survey's findings, we will enhance our students Personal Development, ensuring they are provided with the skills and knowledge required for their future endeavours. We will share relevant information with parents when he have the full information.



**Attendance Matters...**

I have, and I will continue to do so, stress the importance of good regular attendance. It is important for both social development and achieving their academic potential. Attendance started to dip in October, with a significant number of students taking an occasional day off. It is essential we work together to build resilience and prepare our children for adulthood. Research shows these habits need to be formed from a young age so encouraging good attendance is essential. Whole school attendance this half term has been 95.9%. Although this is well above national average, I would want attendance to be above 97%. On a positive note, 481 children have 100% attendance for this half term. This is fantastic!

**ASPIRE Day**



Our first ASPIRE day of the year was a resounding success. Students enjoyed talks on topics such as knife crime, gangs, relationship abuse and mental health. These topics can be 'hard-hitting' but it is necessary that we educate our children on such topics. As expected, our



students were fantastic and showed great maturity and respect for the guests and topics covered. Our hope is to provide them with the tools to make informed decisions as they grow and live their lives in an ever-changing world. Our guests and external speakers were very complimentary about the children. The focus for Yr11 ASPIRE was careers as Yr11 will be making very important decisions about their own futures soon. They had the opportunity to listen to presentations and ask questions to colleges, business owners and employees from a range of professions including a Psychologist, a Facial Reconstructive Scientist, and an Engineer, providing a fantastic opportunity for students to take ownership of their own futures, listen to the experiences of people who are currently in the workplace and start to, if they haven't already, plan their next steps. A massive thanks to all staff who embraced the day, but especially Mrs Taylor and Mr Healey who worked tirelessly behind the scenes to make the day so enriching.

**Year 11 Certificate Evening**



This week we warmly welcomed back the class of 2024. It was great to see so many ex-students coming back to St Damian's to receive their GCSE grades. We celebrated their GCSE outcomes individually and

as a cohort. The key messages were work hard pays off, have confidence in yourself and our unofficial motto, 'Believe to Achieve'. On behalf of all the staff at St Damian's, the best of luck in your futures.

### Art Workshops



In my last newsletter I mentioned our new Art Leaders. In this newsletter I want to show-off the Art workshops. Yr7 and Yr8 are invited to participate in after school art workshops where they can learn new skills, make new friends and boost their confidence. Workshops are planned and delivered by our amazing Yr9 Art Leaders, supported by our Head of Art, Mrs Freeman. This term, students have been learning poly-tile printmaking methods used by professional artists and future workshops may include sculpture, photography and crafts. Workshops run on Tuesdays for 2-3 weeks

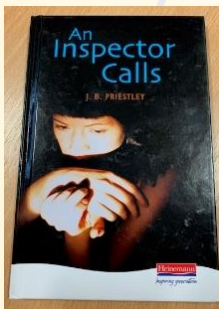
once every half term. To get involved, students need to sign-up when a new workshop is announced as quickly as possible as places are limited.

### Virtual Schools Awards

Mrs Brophy had the pleasure of attending the Virtual School Awards ceremony on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> October on behalf of St Damian's at Clarendon College. This was a prestigious event where children from across Tameside were nominated for an array of accolades. As a school we had nominated Brooke Hilton (Head Girl 2023-24) for excellent academic outcomes. Mrs Brophy said it was an absolute pleasure to be in the room to hear Brooke's name be read out! In the words of the compare 'Brooke embraced her whole education, taking advice from her teachers and continuously striving to do her best!'. Well done Brooke, we are so proud of you and you will always be a well-respected part of our school community.



### Year 10 Forthcoming Trip to The Lowry



The English Faculty are in the process of organising a theatre trip to The Lowry on **Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2025**, to see a matinee performance of JB Priestley's 'An Inspector Calls'. This will be an excellent opportunity to watch a live performance of a GCSE Literature text. Directed by Stephen Daldry, this multi-award-winning National Theatre production is critically acclaimed, 'Hailed as the theatrical event of its generation, winning more awards than any other production in history, An Inspector Calls has thrilled more than 4 million people worldwide.' This will be our third trip to The Lowry to watch this play in the last five years. We know our students will thoroughly enjoy it. I will have the pleasure of accompanying our great students on this trip and I can't wait

### Sharing Good News about our Students

Lola Booth, Yr8 will be doing a 5k run on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> November to raise money for Macmillan Cancer Research. She has set-up a go-fund-me page to raise £200 but she has already smashed that and has raised £237.

The charity is close to everyone's hearts but for Lola, her Nana is cancer survivor and like many of us, her family have sadly lost family members to cancer. Hopefully the money raised will go a little way to helping and supporting families living with cancer.



- **Lauren Jinks.** Lauren was my first Head Girl when I became Headteacher of St Damian's. She has recently graduated from Bristol University after studying Medicine for five years. She is now working as a Doctor at Sheffield Children's Hospital. Despite facing many challenges, her determination, resilience, and believe to



achieve attitude epitomises the St Damian's spirit. I always knew she could do it! Well done, Dr Lauren!

As usual, if you have any good news worth sharing, please get in touch and I will share in my monthly correspondence.

### Upcoming Dates in Half Term 2

Next half term is extremely busy, and I list some key dates below for your perusal.

- Wed 6<sup>th</sup> Nov – Yr7 Parental Information Evening – 6pm
- Thurs 14<sup>th</sup> Nov – Expressive Arts Extravaganza – details to follow
- Fri 15<sup>th</sup> Nov – Staff INSET Day – School closed to all pupils
- Wed 20<sup>th</sup> Nov – Yr11 Parents Evening – 4pm – 7pm
- Fri 22<sup>nd</sup> Nov – Young Carers trip to Manchester Christmas Markets
- Sat 23<sup>rd</sup> Nov – Santa Dash & Christmas Markets – 11am – 2pm
- Mon 2<sup>nd</sup> Dec – Yr11 Mocks begin
- Mon 16<sup>th</sup> Dec – Carol Service, details to follow – 6pm
- Wed 18<sup>th</sup> Dec – Christmas Dinner/Jumper Day
- Fri 20<sup>th</sup> Dec - School closes for Christmas at 1:30pm
- Mon 6<sup>th</sup> Jan 2025 – Students return to school – 9am



### Finally, Staff Well-Being

St Damian's is only as 'good as its staff'. I am proud to lead great teachers and great support staff, all of whom are committed to the education and welfare of your children. Part of our culture, *the St Damian's Way*, is to look after staff. Mrs Ogden and Mrs Jinks, our school Wellbeing Champions, have introduced initiatives to promote staff wellbeing, including mindfulness sessions, fitness classes, and access to mental health support resources. Below are some recent initiatives:

- ✓ In recognition of World Mental Health Day on Thursday 10th October 2024, we were excited to announce the launch of our *BEE WELL, BEE Together Thursday* after-school wellbeing sessions for staff. These sessions, which include activities such as yoga, badminton, and craft workshops, are designed to support staff in maintaining a healthy work-life balance, I firmly believe 'happy staff deliver' for the great children at St Damian's. Here is a picture of staff after their Yoga session looking refreshed!



- ✓ On Friday 4<sup>th</sup> October St Damian's celebrated World Smile Day. The theme of the day was "Do an act of kindness. Help one person smile". The aim was to bring a bit of joy to someone by encouraging them to do random acts of kindness for each other. Staff at St Damian's were all treated to smiley biscuits to enjoy with their cuppa! As you can see from the pictures, they were very much appreciated.



- ✓ On 17<sup>th</sup> October we held an Autumn Fest for staff after school. The idea was that members of staff got together in the literacy hub for an Autumn themed 'Together Thursday' after school.

There was an opportunity to carve your own pumpkin and a selection of mocktails, cakes and crisps to enjoy. The primary purpose of the event



was to spend some quality time, after school unwinding with colleagues before you go home. The prize for the best pumpkin was presented to Mr Cooper.

I hope that all of the St Damian's community have a well-deserved break, and I look forward to the season of Advent, which is always a joyful, but busy, term for our school!

Have a good break and don't forget our annual Santa Dash takes place on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> November!

Yours sincerely

Mr Logue  
Headteacher

**What's on:**  
Festive Funfair  
Face Painting  
Henna Painting  
Jewellery Stall  
and MORE...

 **St Damian's Christmas Markets & Santa Dash**  
**Saturday 23rd November 2024 - 11:00am to 2:00pm**