



ST. AIDAN'S

CHURCH OF ENGLAND HIGH SCHOOL

20th December 2024

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we come to the end of the first term of this academic year, I'd like to take the opportunity to share with you some information about the school which I hope you will find useful. This is in addition to our fantastic InTouch online magazine that is filled with all the incredible things we have been getting up to this term here at St Aidan's.

Most Recent Exam Result

We are very proud to be able to confirm with you that our summer GCSE results have now been published by the DfE and are amongst the highest results in the country. Our student outcomes put us in the top 4% of all secondary schools nationally and the number of students achieving a grade 5+ in both English and maths (a national accountability measure set for all schools) is the highest of all non-selective schools in North Yorkshire. Our progress score of +0.72 is the highest of all Harrogate schools and well above the national average. Our students with special educational needs, and our disadvantaged students also achieved the highest outcomes ever recorded by the school. This incredible success is as a result of a huge team effort between students, staff, parents/carers, governors, and the support of our trust; so well done and thank you each and every one of you. This wonderful year group continue to impress us with their dedicated attitude to learning and commitment to the St Aidan's values as they have transitioned well into year 12.

Our Associated Sixth Form results were equally strong, and an extremely high percentage of our students achieved the grades they needed to get them into their first-choice university. We hope that they continue to embrace the opportunities that life presents to them as they enjoy their life in all its fullness.

Mock Exams

Year 13 students have just completed their mock exams, and we have been very impressed with how they have conducted themselves through this process. Year 11 start their mock exams after Christmas, and we appreciate that this is an anxious time for all of them. Please make sure, if you have children in year 11, that they get a good balance between schoolwork, sleep, healthy eating, and socialising during this Christmas break.

Headteacher: Mrs S Dover

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School Systems

Once again, I want to thank you for your patience as we fully migrate to our new Management Information System. The bulk of this work has been completed and we are slowly refining internal processes to sync with our new digital opportunities. As you will be aware, we are going 'cash free' from January so all parents are encouraged to fully engage with parent pay to avoid the need for disappointment when paying for anything in school.

Unfortunately, we have had to delay the launch of our Aidan's Eats App, but this is re-scheduled for next term and further information will follow. We hope that, for those parents of students in years 7 to 11, you have managed to access your Arbor Parent App and that you are finding an improvement in communication between school and home; this is something that was highlighted by parents in our most recent parent voice survey so we hope you feel we are doing what we can to address issues you raise. Parents also raised concerns about Parents' Evenings and so we have invested in School Cloud, an award-winning piece of software for schools to facilitate these evenings through online booking and video call appointments. You will receive full instructions of how to engage in this shortly before your child's parents evening.

Parent Voice

Forming positive relationships with our parents is important to us and we are always looking at ways to ensure parents feel listened to, involved, and supported with their child's education. We will continue to send out an annual parental questionnaire but are also looking to enlist the involvement of a group of parents who can support us in providing constructive feedback or act as a sounding board when we are considering new initiatives or ways of improving the systems and processes at St Aidan's. We are looking for a team of around 20 parent/carer volunteers from across all year groups and think this will be a valuable step in ensuring we all work closely together to achieve our school vision for each and every one of our students. It is likely that we will be recruiting to this focus group in the summer term ready to fully launch the initiative from September 2025 but will let you know more about this later next year.

Sorry to Mention this next bit!

I wasn't sure whether to include this next section, but I feel it is probably necessary and hope that you can understand my reasons for doing so. We are extremely grateful to all our parents who communicate positively with the school and the overriding majority of parents show respect and kindness when interacting with school staff. However, we have had a few incidences recently where staff have been verbally abused, shouted at, and made to feel inadequate by a very small number of parents during phone calls, emails, parents' evenings, or meetings. We know this is not the norm and we pride ourselves on the relationships we have with parents, but please could I ask all parents and carers to show respect and kindness to the staff at St Aidan's whenever they have the opportunity to communicate. To support staff wellbeing, I have asked all staff to politely, but immediately, end conversations with any parent/carer who is

becoming aggressive or abusive. This can then be passed to me to pick up the conversation on behalf of the school and support all parties in finding a resolution. Once again, I am sorry I have had to mention this but please know my reason for raising it is to protect and support the precious relationships we have, and to ensure that all communication resonates with our Christian values that we model to all our young people.

Continued Professional Development

I remain extremely proud of all the staff at St Aidan's and the fact that they are deeply committed to their own professional development so that all our students get the highest quality educational experience possible. As mentioned in my October half term letter, we have been focussing on Adaptive Teaching methods to ensure a fully inclusive approach to all learning and have also trained staff in the practice of Positive Regard to complement our behaviour system and allow all students to flourish mentally and emotionally as well as academically. We have invested in additional leadership training for our extended leadership team and have embedded our ten Teaching and Learning Principles (TLPs) into our classroom practice. This term, leaders have observed 134 lessons through our Learning Walk strategy, and we are impressed by the outstanding quality of the education being delivered; it's no wonder our results are the best in Harrogate!

Goodbyes

Sadly, we have a few staff moving on at the end of this term and we want to wish them all well in their new ventures. In particular, I would like to thank Mr Addison and, on behalf of all the staff and students, wish him all the best as he moves on to his first Headship position in January. Good luck and thank you for all you have done at St Aidan's.

My final message is to wish you all a peaceful, calm, and joyous Christmas. I hope that you take time to be around family and friends and that you feel Gods' presence in all that you do.

*May God, who has called us out of darkness
into his marvellous light,
bless you all: students, staff and parents,
May you be filled with peace, love, and hope this Christmas.
Amen.*

With warmest wishes for Christmas and the New Year



Siân Dover
Headteacher