



St Joseph's Roman Catholic High School

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Registered Charity Number: 1075795 | **Facebook/Twitter:** StJosephsRCHS

May 2018

Dear Parent/Carer

We are delighted to announce our new extracurricular 'bucket list' offer to come into place in September 2018. At St Joseph's, we realise that achieving a set of good GCSEs is just a small part of what we hope to achieve with our young people. We know that the things that young people remember when they become adults is the way we made them feel and the experiences that helped shape who they were to become. To this end, we set the challenge for our students to achieve at least 100 bucket list experiences before they leave St Joseph's. These might range from playing sport for a school team, performing on a stage in front of an audience or completing a Duke of Edinburgh expedition. See the attached Bucket list offer to get a flavour for what this will look like. Our PSA have offered funds to support the setting up of new activities. We realise that we need student views to match these experiences with their own wish lists and these will be sought on our next curriculum enrichment day later this term. Staff have committed to putting on an afterschool experience for our young people. For Year 11, we will provide a series of booster sessions to support their revision throughout the whole of Year 11 to avoid the need for any last minute cramming. For Year 7, we will be running some catch-up sessions so that those leaving primary school with skill deficits can catch up quickly with our dedicated literacy and numeracy specialists and make great progress at St Josephs.

In addition to this, after lengthy consultation with a meeting with parents in November 2017 and an online survey for parents, staff and students we have worked with all our bus company providers to adjust our school day. This is to enable us to give a deeper learning experience as part of the curriculum. Lessons will now be termed 'Learning episodes.' There will be 5 a day and they will be an hour long. This enables enough time for students to improve their previous work to respond to teacher marking, addressing any misconceptions, activate new learning and show real resilience by completing a piece of work of GCSE challenge. It also provides time to set quality home learning. The timetable allocation will be spread over a two week period, with 'Week A' being slightly different to 'Week B'. This is so that we can meet curriculum demands and parental requests more time on new GCSE courses. This means that Years 7 and 8 will be about filling any skill deficits from primary school and then create a secure, firm knowledge and skill base on which to build GCSEs. At the end of Year 8, students will choose their 'specialist' subjects and then will spend the following three years studying for their GCSEs. As for the timings of the school day, there were two options to choose from and 305 members of the community expressed their vote. We have listened to the community and noted that 77% voted to begin at 8:30am with a warning bell at 8:25am. Students would need to be on site by the warning bell. As most of our buses are here by 8:25am anyway, we do not imagine that the buses will have to pick up much earlier than they currently do. However, GMT will finalise their bus routes and publish them in July. The usual school day will finish at 2:45pm to provide time after school for our extensive bucket list offer and period 6 boosters. It will also provide dedicated time for us to train staff, so that we can improve our provision. Timings for lessons will be finalised next half term. Please note that the school day will run as usual until the Summer break.





The new curriculum requires additional staffing. Consequently, Governors, the Senior Team and Heads of Department have been busy recruiting new teaching staff to ensure that we are ready to deliver our new curriculum. We have recruited two additional Science staff to avoid the staffing difficulties that are experienced in many Science Departments across the country. We have plans to boost the teaching time in Science to fill in any skill gaps. We are currently recruiting extra English and Maths teachers to provide further stability in core subjects.

Following on from our uniform survey that took place in December 2017, we would like to invite parents and carers to a meeting to share proposals on 12 June at 6pm. The idea is that we consider the affordability, durability and suitability of our uniform, especially the style and length of our skirts. Any changes would only take place in September 2019. We will also be seeking your views on the work of our Mission Working Party, as we renew mission over the next few weeks.

May we thank you for all your support and ideas on the school day and curriculum throughout this last 8 month collaboration exercise. We realise that change is hard for people to come to terms with and a very few members of the community have had lots of questions and been speculating about why these changes are necessary. We have tried to listen to concerns and address them as best we could. The reality is that GCSEs are much more challenging than they used to be and our curriculum at St Joseph's has got to change to enable experiences that will help our students to achieve good outcomes and prepare them for a brilliant future beyond school. 'Staying the same' cannot be an option for us, if we are going to raise young people to be game changers in our future world.

Yours sincerely

T McCabe

Tony McCabe
Headteacher