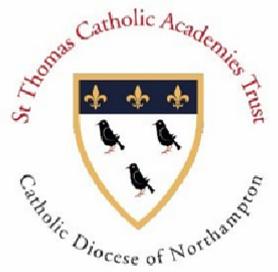


September 2025



Newsletter

DEAR PARENTS AND CARERS

Happy New Year!

Welcome back and, to our new starters, welcome to St Martin's. We hope you will be very happy here. It is great to see everyone coming happily into school after the summer break.

Please take a moment to read this month's newsletter to stay informed and find out how you can support your child's journey at school.

Mrs Barnaville & Mrs Gallagher

HEAD BOY & HEAD GIRL

Head Girl and Head Boy

We are delighted to announce Chizara and Josiah from Year 6 becoming appointed the new Head Girl and Head Boy. They are excellent role models for the other children and we are sure that they will be great ambassadors for our school. Chizara and Josiah will receive a blessing at our mass for the beginning of the new school year.

UNIFORM

Please make sure that all uniform is labelled.

Please can we remind you of a number of issues around uniform that we have noticed with just a few children since we returned after the summer break.

(full details of our uniform policy can be found on our website)

- **Earrings** - only a small stud (not hooked or looped) in each ear is allowed, but these must be removed for PE. (Health and Safety guidance for schools.)
- **Tracksuits for outdoor PE** should be plain navy blue or black in colour, with no logos. Please do not send your child in a 'hoody' – these are dangerous for PE as they can get caught or pulled.
- Current fashions in shoes, clothing and hair should be avoided. Children's hair should be smart and tidy and long hair must be tied back using the school colours (boys and girls) Fashions involving patterns, very closely shaved or those similar to the mohican style, should be avoided.
- School bags need to be a reasonable size, a small back pack, we do not have room for larger bags in the cloakrooms.
- Children need to wear shoes, not boots.

If a pupil is not meeting the expectations outlined in our policy, a gentle reminder will be sent home to keep you informed and help us work together in supporting your child.

If you need any support with items of school uniform, please contact our Family Worker.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Fixed penalty fines

We had already had a number of requests for a leave of absence. As mentioned last year, leave **will not** be authorised during term time unless it is considered exceptional circumstances. We regret to inform you that visiting relatives abroad who are ill, is not considered as an exceptional circumstance. Please read the important information below, from the Local Authority, updating all parents and carers about recent changes in relation to attendance.

Please be aware that as from August 2024, since the publishing of the latest DfE Working Together to Improve School Attendance guidance, there have been some significant changes to how and when Parents can receive Fixed Penalty Fines for unauthorised absences (including holidays).

Please note the following changes:

The Local Authority can and will take action on 10 or more sessions (half days) - equal to 5 school days - of unauthorised absence* within a 10 school week rolling period

The 10 week rolling period spans both terms and school years (e.g. two days of unauthorised absence at the end of July and 3 days of unauthorised absence in September will count as 5 days of unauthorised absence under the guidance and may result in further action being taken against you (e.g. a Fixed Penalty Fine per Parent per Child of £80 payable in first 21 days or £160 thereafter).

The Local Authority also reserves the right to issue a Fixed Penalty before the above threshold is met. This could include where parents are deliberately avoiding the national threshold by taking several term time holidays below threshold, or for repeated absence for birthdays or other family events.

Please remember to consult our Attendance Policy for the correct process and time frame for you to request any Leave of Absence for your child. Under the new guidance, Leave of Absence can only be authorised by the Head Teacher in the most exceptional of circumstances and in accordance with your School's Attendance Policy.

We know that your Child will only achieve their full potential in life when they are in School and learning and therefore we ask you to support us with this.

If you have any questions or concerns about this or any other attendance issue, please contact our Attendance Officer in the first instance.

*Unauthorised absences are not just holidays, they also include late marks (after the close of the register), unreported absences (not reported in line with the school's current attendance policy) and absences where you have previously been notified to provide medical evidence by our Attendance Officer and are unable to do so.

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

- Please refer to our **Healthy Eating Policy** on the school website for clarification on what foods can and can not be brought into school. Our policy is written in line with the Department for Education's 'School food standards'
- KS2 -Please pack a healthy snack (fruit or vegetable) and a water bottle for your child each day. This helps keep them energised and hydrated throughout their busy day
- KS1 & EY - A piece of fruit or a vegetable will be provided for you each day during snack time.
- **Birthday sweets** - We are aware that many families are struggling financially and so we have decided that if you do want to give something when it is your child's birthday, that a donation to the Luton Foodbank would be more appropriate. You can talk to your child and explain that this is a really positive thing to do. We will set up a donation point in school and we would encourage you to bring your child with you to make the donation. Please do not send in sweets or any other gifts, as **they will not be given out.**

- **Illnesses** If your child has been sick or has diarrhoea, they must be kept off school for 48 hours following the last episode. Please notify us immediately if your child has chicken pox, slapcheek or scarlet fever. Please report all absences to the school office 01582 617600

- **Collection at the end of the day** - Already in the short time we have been back we have had a number of children who are not being collected on time at the end of the day. We do not have staff available to supervise any children who are not picked up on time after school. Teachers need to attend training or meetings after school and are not able to stay with any children. If, on the rare occasion, should you know you will be late collecting your child/children at the end of the day, please inform the school office as soon as possible.
Children are often very distressed at not being collected on time. When children are collected late at the end of the day, steps will be followed as per our **Late collection policy**, which can be found on the the school website.

Playtarium - Should you require child care after school, we have a very good company, Playtarium, that provides this and can be booked online. [Home \(playtarium.com\)](http://playtarium.com)

MACMILLAN COFFEE MORNING

On Friday 26th September, we will be holding a coffee and cake fundraising morning in the KS1 hall. Please come along for a chat and to support both of these charities in memory of members of our school community who have been affected by these illnesses. Please donate cakes to the school office on Thursday 25th September or Friday 26th September. This will also be a non-uniform day and we will be asking for a donation of £1 per child.



MORNING DROP OFF



While settling back into a new school year, we understand that mornings can sometimes be emotional for children during drop-off, and we truly appreciate your care and concern.

Please be assured that our staff are experienced in supporting children through these moments and will always ensure they are safe, comforted, and settled as quickly as possible.

A confident and reassuring goodbye helps your child feel secure and ready to enjoy their day.

To help us focus fully on the children during this time, we kindly ask that parents and carers avoid calling or emailing the school to request updates shortly after drop-off. If there is ever a genuine concern, we will of course contact you directly.

COMMUNICATION

If you have any concerns or queries about your child, please contact the class teacher via email at help@smdpluton.co.uk. Teachers are unable to speak with parents on the playground at the end of the day, as their priority is ensuring children are dismissed safely and are often then required to attend meetings and/or training courses or run clubs after the school day ends. They will respond to your message when they are able to give you the time and attention your query deserves.

All school communication is sent via parentmail—please ensure you are signed up to receive updates so you don't miss important information. While Class Dojo is used within school for classroom activities, it is not a platform for parent-teacher communication. This helps us keep messages consistent and avoid overwhelming families with information from multiple sources. Messages sent to teachers via Class Dojo will not be read or responded to. If you have any concerns relating to your child, their class teacher will be more than happy to help but this needs to be emailed to help@smdpluton.co.uk and they will respond at their earliest convenience.

Please note: Our Early Years and Nursery use Class Dojo as part of their daily practice, in line with most early years settings, but this is not a statutory requirement for schools.

Key Stage 1 will use Class Dojo to share phonics / spellings and any homework issued.



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY



Please look out for information that will be sent out via Parentmail.

- PLSP meetings – Wednesday 15th October 3.45 - 5pm in the KS2 hall. PLSP
- Appointments will be available to book on Parentmail.
- Year 6 Information evening – Wednesday 17th September at 6pm in the KS2 hall. (This will be about High School Transfer – the parent/carer of every child in Yr6 should attend)
- Parent evenings – Wednesday 5th November 3.45 – 6.00pm & Thursday 6th November 5 - 7.30pm.
- Appointments will be available to book on Parentmail. Details will be sent nearer the time.
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NEW STAFF

And finally we would like to offer a very warm welcome to some new staff at our school: Miss Clarke, class teacher in 4M, Ms Noor, class teacher in 6P and Mrs Olisa, Teaching Assistant.