

16 December 2020

Dear Parents, Carers and Families,

This busy and successful autumn term has been demanding and challenging to staff, students and families alike. As this term draws to a close, I would like to thank each and every one of you for the great support you have given to me and the staff in what has been a year like none other. I greatly appreciate the trust you continue to place in St. Paul's, as being the best place for your child to thrive, be happy and be successful.

I particularly want to thank you for the support you have given our young people with our Remote Learning strategy. I appreciate such learning brings even more challenges to you in your work and home lives. We have been delighted with how students have responded and engaged in their remote studies. We continue to seek to improve the virtual offer, so next term will open with further trials of our remote learning contingency plan, with two remote learning days on Monday 4th and Tuesday 5th January. Students will engage with their learning from home on these days and it is my hope and expectation that all students will be welcomed back on site for face-to-face education from Wednesday 6th January.

For all of us the current experience is a difficult one, marked as it is by the increase in numbers of Covid-19 cases in our school and wider communities. Many of our students have been required to self-isolate by remaining in their homes and not going outdoors for the designated period of time. Others who do not need to self-isolate have still been required to follow the national guidance for Tier 3 very high alert areas, which includes no meeting with members of other households either indoors or in most outdoor places. Such restrictions are in place to help stop the spread of the C-19 virus and help keep our community safe. My prayers and hopes are for our school and wider community to keep safe and well, not only during this holy season, but also throughout the New Year.

As we come to the end of term, we also have to make our farewells. This term we say goodbye to Samina Faucher and Chelsea Croft, who will be leaving for pastures new and Patricia Sweeney, who has been a valued member of our Admin team for 11 years. We must also say goodbye to three long-serving and esteemed members of staff, Aine Allen, Teresa Casey and Graham Sidwell. These three colleagues between them have served 74 years of loyal and dedicated service to generations of students at St. Paul's and we wish them all the very best for their futures. They will be missed, and leave with our love and grateful thanks for all that they have done and for all that they have been.

C-19 has cast a long shadow over our school and wider community. Despite the challenges and increased anxieties that come with C-19, our students have displayed great courage and resilience in the face of such adversity. They have shown how much they value their studies and education. I was particularly proud of how our Year 11 students approached their pre-public examinations [mocks] and how superbly they conducted themselves during the examination period.

I am also proud of how our students, with your support, continue to think of others in need and have actively been involved in supporting CentrePoint, the WMCA in Woolwich, our local Mother and Baby Home, as well as our local Greenwich and Bexley Hospice.

Your sons and daughters have also opened their hearts to others by actively engaging with two of our Advent initiatives, 'Giving Tree' and 'The 12 Days of Christmas Advent Acts of Kindness', they are a great credit to you and the Academy.

I am enormously proud of the students and the staff and continue to feel humbled in leading such an exceptional school. I close my letter with the angels' greeting to the shepherds, 'Do not be afraid, I bring you news of great joy. Today a Saviour has been born to you, he is Christ the Lord.' May the Christ Child bless your every step, all your actions and life, and grant you much joy and peace.

With my very best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "S. Malone". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'S' and a horizontal line underneath the name.

Miss S Malone
Principal