



ST HILDA'S
CE HIGH SCHOOL

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Newsletter September 2018

WELCOME (BACK)

The summer holidays seem to have flown by, possibly not for parents and carers though! A new year, a new start and a chance to build on the fantastic year we had 2017-18.

This year sees the highest number of students in the history of St Hilda's. We have 170 lovely new students in our Year 7 and record numbers in Year 12. Over 88% of last year's Year 11 have joined us in St Hilda's College, our sixth form. We also have record numbers of students from other schools with 35 new to St Hilda's. They are all equally welcome!

We celebrated excellent A Level and GCSE examination results in August. Both days were a joy to share with students and staff. Watching their hard work come to fruition is a high point of the year. All of Year 13 are placed in a university of their choice, on a higher-level apprenticeship, doing an Art Foundation course or in employment. Universities and courses range from Business at Liverpool University, French and French Law at Leeds to Veterinary Science at Edinburgh University.

Our Year 11 students certainly met the challenge of new and longer examinations! Their results are excellent. It is a completely new system of 9-1 instead of A*-E this year in all subjects apart from Business and Sociology. Using English and Maths to show the achievement of our students, 87% got a grade 4 or higher in English and Maths, compared to 66% nationally. We are in the top 3 schools in Liverpool for English and Maths GCSE results. Of course, all subjects have done equally as well and I will publish a sheet of overall results for you in due course.

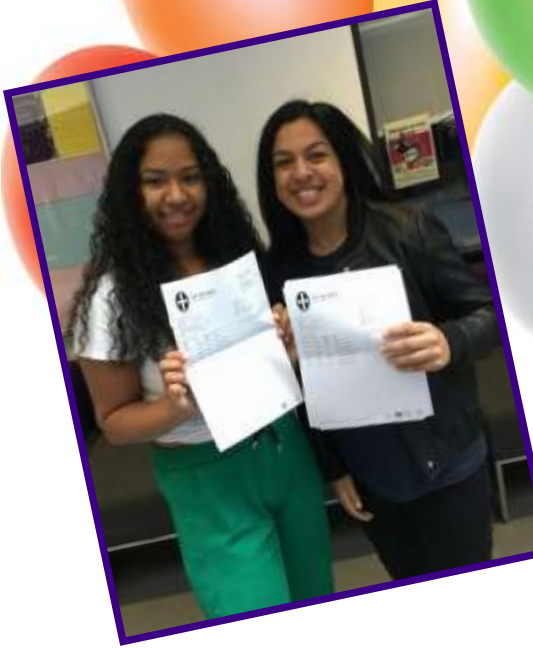
I am looking forward to another great year and really appreciate your support and feedback. Mr Martin is in charge of feedback this year, so you will be invited to give us your opinion throughout the year. An excellent way to shape the future of St Hilda's is by joining our Friends of St Hilda's (FOSH), which is gathering momentum and already planning another fundraising event. All parents, carers, ex-students and friends of St Hilda's are welcome to join and come along. The more, the merrier!

I have enclosed the paperwork for those of you interested in becoming a **parent governor** at St Hilda's. Parental involvement in the governing body and the direction of the school is paramount. If you are interested, please fill in the paperwork. Further details can be gained from Mrs Topping at school, who is clerk to Governors.

Looking forward to seeing you all over the coming months. We appreciate your support with ensuring homework is done, uniform is perfect and attendance does not fall beneath 97%. As I have mentioned, the 3-legged stool (parents, school, and student partnership) is useless if one of the legs break. Together we are a strong team with a shared interest, the very best for our children/students.

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Results Days 2018



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Targets, sets and progress

I know that if you do not work in the world of education, the language we use can be confusing. I know Mr Code asks me for clarification about the reports we get for our children. Our students' targets are set based on their Key Stage 2 results, the examinations they sat in Year 6. These give an indication of what they could get at GCSE. Mrs Cowdell and I are working on target setting and reports to make things clearer to staff and parents. We will share the changes we make with you and will be asking for parental feedback on any changes. We ask for your patience in this matter, as we want to make sure that the targets are aspirational and inspire our students to work hard, but that they do not overwhelm them.

You will be aware that we have slightly changed our setting this year. The rationale behind it was to allow students to be in the right group for them. Historically, students were put into a set in Year 7 with the same students for every lesson and stayed in there, sometimes for 3 or more years. It is really important that our students work with lots of different students, allowing them to look for aspiration in others and be the aspiration for other students.

Heads of department have worked really hard to build groups of students who will learn effectively together. These bands are also more fluid than the old setting arrangement and students will be moved to the right group for them based on exams, homework and effort throughout the year. In my letters to parents I spoke about mixed ability. This has caused some confusion and I apologise for this. The term mixed ability does not mean that there is the full ability range in each group, but students of similar ability with the ability to move as necessary. Under the historical system, students were setted in very rigid groups and a set change meant a set change across all subjects, which is not always right for the student.

We have named the bands A and B. The bands are equal. We have split the year group into 2 equal halves to help with timetabling. A band is not 'better' than B band and students have been told this. Some of the initial teething problems have been sorted and new timetables issued. I wholeheartedly apologise for any upset this may have caused. As with any new system, tweaks are needed.

In each band, students will cover the same work and be challenged in a positive way to be the best they can be. In addition to the usual report about academic progress, you will receive a Behaviour For Learning (BFL) report this year in which every subject will report back on the effort and organisation of your son/daughter. These are new to St Hilda's, but we hope that you find them useful.

YEAR 7 UPDATE

What a pleasure it has been to welcome our new Year 7 students. My son has also gone into Year 7, but at a different school. If your sons and daughters are like my son, they would have been exhausted at the end of the week! Uniforms have been exceptional and manners equally so. I am getting lots of smiles and hellos when I open the gates at 8 am.

This is our largest year group with 170 students, so we are working on our rules with Year 7. I have great hopes for them all. This past week they have enjoyed coming for lunch earlier than the rest of the school. They are now ready for the usual school lunch time.

As we have students from 57 different primary schools, some students are the only one from their school. Involvement in extra-curricular activities can help to break the ice. Look out for the information and encourage your child to take part.

If you have any concerns or questions, please contact the school and speak to the form tutor in the first instance.

YEAR 8 UPDATE

This is going to be a busy year for Year 8. They will choose their options in March 2019. It is vital that they work as hard as they can to know which subjects are the right ones for them. I have spoken to all Year 8 students about the importance of this year and they know to expect the options process. You are an important part of the options process and we will be inviting you into an Options Evening to get more information. Students will also have a taster week so they have the chance to 'try' every subject.

YEAR 9 UPDATE

An exciting year for Year 9 who start their GCSEs. I know some parents were concerned about narrowing the subjects too soon, but we will ensure that skills and knowledge are not affected by this through cross-curricular opportunities and the Duke of Edinburgh scheme.

The Duke of Edinburgh scheme is an excellent way for students to improve their skills in several key areas. Employers and universities rate this award very highly and is known as one of the qualifications that does open doors for our young people. All Year 9 students will be enrolled on the Bronze Award and have dedicated lessons to support this journey. They will gain 3 certificates in skills, volunteering and physical by the end of the course. There will be the opportunity to convert to the full Bronze Award by completing the expedition. Ms Flavin and I will have more details later in the Year. For those of you interested in this award, this link will take you to the website: <https://www.dofe.org/what-is-dofe>
Home learning is really important. Homework will be set regularly and students will be given passwords for both SAM Learning and GCSEPod. Both of these e-learning sites are proven to increase grades with consistent use. They are also easy to use and give students the opportunity to increase knowledge and exam practice outside of school hours.

YEAR 10 UPDATE

An exciting year for Year 10 students too as they embark on their new GCSE courses. They have 18 months before they take their examinations, so we are starting as we mean to go on! Students will be supported throughout this intense period of time, but good study skills now are vital to them achieving their best.

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YEAR 11 UPDATE

Year 11 is a 2-term year! Most subjects have all had 1 or 2 years' experience of the new exams and are expert in understanding the demands. Given the importance of this year, you will be invited in to 2 meetings about your daughter. Please make every effort to attend. Please keep us informed of any concerns you have during this stressful year. We do run Mindfulness sessions to help but, as staff, knowing if there are particular issues allows us to support more effectively. Their mock examinations start on 26th November, so we will be concentrating on study skills in PSHE and subject lessons.

YEAR 12 UPDATE

A fabulous start to the year. There are record numbers in Year 12 with over 88% of last year's Year 11 back with us, alongside record numbers of external students. They have settled in really well and are a lovely group of young people. We will be offering enrichment and the EPQ (Extended Project Qualification) over the next few weeks. I will be running the Bar National Mock Trial competition and would welcome help from any parent/carer who is a barrister! Work experience for Year 12 is a very important part of their course. This week takes place from Monday 1st July to Friday 5th July 2019. We will be asking you for your support in finding suitable placements for the students. Thank you in advance!

YEAR 13 UPDATE

Year 13 is a 2-term year too! Focus and hard work is vital this year. Teachers are there to support students. The vast majority of our students still go to university. We will be finalising UCAS applications over the coming months. As one admissions tutor told me, 'an early application is a good application', so we will be asking students for their personal statements and, as with every Year 13, they will need to re-draft several times. As parents and carers, if you could read the personal statements, that would be a great help! My daughter is in Year 13 and we are doing this at the minute. It can be a stressful time, but once they are gone, the offers start coming in!

Please note that Year 13 mocks starts on 26th November, so revision should be on-going from now.

DATES FOR THE DIARY 2018-19

Half term 1

Tuesday 4th September – Friday 19th October

Half term 2

Monday 29th October – Friday 21st Dec (school finishes early at midday)

Half term 3

Monday 7th January – Friday 15th February

Half term 4

Monday 25th February – Friday 5th April

Half term 5

Tuesday 23rd April – Friday 24th May (Monday 6th May May Day – school is closed)

Half term 6

Monday 3rd June – Friday 19th July (school finishes early at midday)

School Holidays

Monday 22nd October – Friday 26th October

Monday 23rd December – Friday 4th January 2019

Monday 18th February – Friday 22nd February

Monday 8th April – Monday 22nd April

Monday 27th May – Friday 31st May

INSET Days

(no students in school)

Monday 3rd September

Friday 28th September

Monday & Tuesday 22/23 July

*1 INSET day to be arranged



PARENT EVENTS BY YEAR GROUP

| YEAR GROUP | EVENT | DATE & TIME |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| YEAR 7 | MEET THE FORM TUTOR | Thursday 4 th September 4.00 -6.30 |
| YEAR 7 | PARENTS' EVENING | Thursday 2 nd May 3.30 – 6.30 |
| YEAR 8 | OPTIONS EVENING | Thursday 7 th March 6.00 – 8.00 |
| YEAR 8 | PARENTS EVENING | Thursday 14 th March 3.30 – 6.30 |
| YEAR 8 | INDIVIDUAL OPTION MEETINGS | Monday 1 st April 8.30 – 6.00 |
| YEAR 9 | STEPS TO SUCCESS | Wednesday 3 rd October 6.00 – 7.30 |
| YEAR9 | PARENTS' EVENING | Thursday 21 st March 3.30 – 6.30 |
| YEAR 10 | STEPS TO SUCCESS | Wednesday 19 th September 6.00 – 7.30 |
| YEAR 10 | PARENTS' EVENING | Thursday 31 st January 3.30 – 6.30 |
| YEAR 11 | PARENTS' EVENING | Thursday 11 th October 3.30 – 6.30 |
| YEAR 11 | ST HILDA'S COLLEGE OPEN EVENING | Thursday 15 th November 6.00 – 8.30 |
| YEAR 11 | INDIVIDUAL COLLEGE GUIDANCE MEETINGS | Friday 1 st March 8.30 – 6.00 |
| YEAR 12 | STEPS TO SUCCESS | Thursday 20 th September 6.30 – 7.30 |
| YEAR 12 | PARENTS' EVENING | Thursday 7 th February 3.30 – 6.30 |
| YEAR 12 | REVIEW AFTERNOON | Tuesday 11 th June 1.00 – 4.30 |
| YEAR 13 | PARENTS' EVENING | Thursday 1 st November 3.30 – 6.30 |
| YEAR 13 | REVIEW AFTERNOON | Tuesday 5 th March 1.00 – 4.30 |
| ALL YEAR GROUPS | CAROL SERVICE | Monday 17 th December 12.30 – 2.30 (students will be dismissed at 2.30 from the Cathedral) |
| ALL YEAR GROUPS | PRIZE EVENING* | Thursday 22 nd November 6.30 – 8.30 |

* by invitation only

Please note the following early finish dates and time

| EVENT | DATE & TIME SCHOOL FINISHES |
|---|---|
| ST HILDA'S COLLEGE OPEN EVENING | Thursday 15 th November – 1.45 |
| CAROL SERVICE | Monday 17 th December 2.30 |
| END OF TERM | Friday 21 st December – 12.00 |
| ST HILDA'S OPEN EVENING FOR YEARS 4 & 5 | Thursday 4 th July – 1.45 |
| END OF SCHOOL YEAR | Friday 19 th July – 12.00 |

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