



Dear Prospective Parent/Carer,

This is just a brief communication to add my welcome to the St Bernard's High School community. From September 2021, I have the privilege of being the Headteacher of this excellent school which has at its heart Christ's example and teachings 'that we love one another as He has loved us.'

St Bernard's has a long tradition of successfully providing a holistic education for all of the girls in the main school and of course to all within our mixed sixth form. High educational standards alongside all-encompassing pastoral care make St Bernard's more than a school – we are a family! We recognise and seek to further develop, deepen and nurture the individual talents, abilities and possibilities for all of the students that we serve. We prioritise getting to know our students as we understand our role in helping and guiding them towards their chosen paths enabling them to have professionally and personally fulfilling lives. I am supported by a committed and talented staff who share in this vision and know how vital it is for us to know your child's capabilities and how we support them to meet and excel against challenging targets. Every child counts.

As Headteacher, I am ambitious for every young person who enters the doors of St Bernard's. I want to continue to drive the school towards outstanding so that our students fondly remember the broad, balanced, experiential education they received which prepared them for the demands of the 21st century both professionally and spiritually. My strong faith, my belief in the power of education and its ability to make a difference to each individual alongside my commitment to empowering our young people to thrive are my passions. I am delighted to bring my passion, energy and enthusiasm to the role of Headteacher at St Bernard's so that all may continue to see the St Bernard's community flourish.

For those of you who are new to St Bernard's and for those of you who have been with us a little longer, you will know that Mr Sharpe, now approaching retirement, has built very strong foundations based on high expectations, excellent teaching and strong partnerships between home, school and our Parishes. I will do all in my power to continue with this legacy and to further enhance the lived experience for all within the St Bernard's High School community.

I believe that choosing the right school for your child is like choosing a second family. Your child will spend more time with us each year and so it is vital that you feel that your child will feel happy, safe and thrive within the environment you choose. I am confident that from what you hear and read about the school, you will feel this way about St Bernard's and should it be that your daughter joins us, I will look forward to welcoming you in future.

I wish you and your child every success in the coming academic year.

Warm regards

Allison Moise-Dixon
Headteacher



PASTORAL

St Bernard's is proud of the pastoral systems it has in place to support the students. Your daughter's form has been carefully put together so that the transition to secondary school can be as smooth as possible; her form tutor will be made aware of any needs she may have and will support her. If your daughter finds she is struggling to settle into school, or has difficulties with workload and organisation, we have four dedicated learning mentors who will be able to help her. The learning mentors will support her and if required give you an update on her progress. We also have a school counsellor who can support your daughter with any emotional needs, but we will require you to fill in a consent form before this can start.

Your daughter needs to be in the correct full uniform in school and this is all outlined in the pack you would have received. If you have any issues with obtaining the uniform, please contact the school and we will try to help. Our mobile phone policy has also been given to you and I would be grateful if you went through this with your daughter so that she is aware of the rules- these rules will also be re-iterated by the form tutor and her Head of Year once she starts at St Bernard's. We look forward to getting to know your daughter once she is in Year 7 and if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact myself or Miss James.

Mrs Barnes (Assistant Headteacher)



SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

The Learning Support department plays a vital role in St Bernard's school life. Although we support students with additional learning needs, we are available for all children to access our services. We are based in EO1 and we are fortunate enough to have a highly experienced and dedicated department.

Our aim is to make all students independent learners no matter what their additional learning needs are. Teachers are trained how to appropriately differentiate work and through teaching strategies help all students maximize their potential. Students are monitored through curriculum and pastoral structures and in the first term we look to identify the nature of the support required for students. Learning Support Assistants do go into some classrooms and this means that they are knowledgeable with the whole school curriculum and methods used to support student's learning in school.

We have a comprehensive transition policy at St Bernard's so if your child has an additional learning need, we would have been made aware of it through correspondence with the primary school or through your own paperwork. Normally we would visit primary school but I or the Head of Year have spoken to many of the Special Needs Co-ordinators and/or class teachers to see what support is needed for each student. We will try and implement individual support for each student, so they can access their lessons in a way which is suitable to them. The role of the Head of Inclusion is to oversee the support your daughter receives, and to put in place resources to support her. I also meet with individual parents to review students' Early Health Care Plans which have been put in place by the Local Authority. Much of the work consists of sharing information with staff, making sure they are aware of your daughter's learning needs and advising them on how to support her through various teaching strategies, which often can vary from subject to subject. The transition to secondary school is a challenge, and we try to help the students acclimatise to the greater freedoms, independence and ultimately responsibilities they face when they arrive at secondary school. Helping with organisation is key initially for year 7 students; they also need help learning the routes of the school, using their planners, meeting new teachers, and following their own timetable. Some students want to be independent and we are there to support them so they can do that. We aim to help students to become self-reliant, through developing learning strategies to help them when they eventually venture into the wider world.

We provide help outside of lessons in our learning support room (EO1) and this is a place where students can be helped with their studies and completing their homework. We also encourage students with additional learning needs to make use of the resources available in EO1, and we are open before and after school as well as at lunchtime. We are starting to make use of the amazing electronic resources which are available, computer programmes such as Read Write, Gold, reading pens and iPads which can help the students become more independent. The Learning Support Team run small group interventions and help monitor reading through the Accelerated Reader programme. We also provide help during the external exams and have students assessed for Exam Access Arrangements.

As a department we also support medical needs and, if these impact on a student's access to lessons, we try to put in place strategies to support, based on the medical guidance we are provided with. We should have been made aware of any medical conditions that your daughter may have, but if we have not, please



let the school know. If your daughter requires a Health Care Plan from a doctor or nurse, then, where appropriate, we will meet with you to discuss the recommendations. If your daughter has anaphylaxis it is important that the school is provided with auto-injectors (“epipens”) for emergencies, as well as her having her own personal pen in school.

Some students will find that the move to secondary school can be one that causes them anxiety and we do all we can to alleviate it. I think it is important to emphasize the wonderful opportunities and challenges that students have at St Bernard’s School, such as studying new subjects, and it is an opportunity for students to find new passions and interests and meet new people. I think it is so important that we encourage our students to see this change as a positive and wonderful thing. We obviously have faced challenging times with the lock down but I would argue that this should be something to be embraced: we now know what it is like not to have access to school and hopefully going forward students will see the privileges that education gives them. The staff in EO1 are really caring and we know St Bernard’s will seem like large school for many students; we are here to assist with any problems or worries students may have, no matter how small they may appear. We look to support the whole child and want to encourage them to grow as individuals, becoming independent and resilient. It is really important to the department that those with Special Educational Needs have the same opportunities as every other student in the school, and we aim for them to be the best version of themselves by setting them aspirational targets, ensuring they have the same high-quality education as the other students, and providing the support to help them achieve their goals.

Mrs Whittle (Head of Inclusion)



TRANSPORT

St Bernard's is situated in a residential area and close to a number of junior schools, and therefore the start and end of the school day can have a significant impact on those living close by. We want to be a good neighbour and therefore we need our students and their parents to support this.

Currently students access the school via the metal gate on Milton Road, where they are greeted by members of the sixth form from 8.00. That gate will shut at 8.45 precisely. After that they will be classed as late, and need to enter the school via reception.

Ideally those who can should walk to school. This has always been our preference, but it is even more relevant in these times. Students need to be aware that, when they are walking in a group, they need to be aware of other pavement users and move into a line to allow the other users to pass by. All too often our students can be so engaged in their conversations that they fail to notice a parent pushing a buggy or an older person walking along. Their awareness and courtesy has real impact. If your child is walking please ensure that, as the darker evenings and mornings start, that they are visible; potentially reflective strips on their bag or coat can be helpful.

We encourage those who can to ride their bikes into school. We have bike sheds where bikes can be locked appropriately. If using a bike please ensure that it is roadworthy, and that your child uses a helmet and has the necessary lights.

We appreciate that many will need to use the bus and train because of the distance you live from St Bernard's. The school is well positioned for public transport, being walking distance from both the C2C line at Westcliff and the First Anglia line coming into Southend Victoria. There are First Direct bus stops at the junction of Milton Road and London Road (the Cricketers' Pub stop) and Stephenson Buses run specific routes that bring students across the Borough for school times. Their details are on the website. Again the girls are distinctive in their uniforms and members of the public do contact us about their behaviour, whether good or bad. Students need to be aware about how they conduct themselves, by being courteous to other users, in the way they move round and in the volume of their conversations. The same sanctions apply to students when they are travelling to school, as when they are actually in lessons on site.

Finally some will be transported by car. This is our least preferred method, as parents seem to want to drop their child as close to the entrance gate as possible, regardless of the safety implications. This blocks Milton Road, making it dangerous to the other students, other road users and any other pedestrians. It also means that, at the end of the day, cars are temporarily stopped in any space they can find, blocking the side roads and residents' driveways. Therefore if you do need to use the car please can you arrange to drop your child a little away from the school so they can walk the last few metres; similarly, when collecting them, please an arrangement to meet them some distance away from the school, so everyone can leave safely. There are car parks at the Cliffs, at the bottom of Milton Road, or in North Road - just the other side of the junction on London Road.

Mrs Krone (School Business Manager)



YEAR 7 VIRTUAL TRANSITION - MUSIC

"At St Bernard's, music is at the forefront of many things we do, within the classroom, on an individual basis and during our Whole School Masses and celebrations. Music enables students to develop their self-confidence, independence, personality and is character building, in addition to becoming part of a team. We have many music provisions at St Bernard's which I would encourage your daughter to consider when joining us in September. If you have played an instrument during Primary school and are looking to continue or you are new to music and would like to learn a new skill, there is an instrument for everyone.

We are proud to offer:

Flute, clarinet, harp, violin, guitar, bass guitar, drums, piano, keyboard, singing.

All lessons are 15 minutes per week and your daughter will be given a time and day for her lesson. The lesson will take place during the school day as we are unable to offer lessons outside school hours. Most of our students take graded examinations within their instrument to prepare them for GCSE and A Level Music and others prefer to learn for fun.

Our instrumental teaching staff are excellent, inspiring and will guide your daughter in her chosen instrument.

Letters will be sent to you for you to complete at your earliest convenience so that I can get your daughter on the waiting list for lessons as soon as they commence in the Autumn Term.

In addition to our instrumental lesson we also offer the following extra curricular activities:

Orchestra, Chamber Choir, whole school choir, woodwind group, band and we will be hoping to offer some new clubs in the new academic year.

Miss Chapman (Head of Music)