



‘Cardinal Pole Catholic School is a community of **service** guiding young people on a path to **opportunity**, **aspiration**, and **reward**, founded on Catholic values.’

HEADTEACHERS ONLINE PARENT FORUM

Friday 15th September 2023

Welcome to this year’s first Headteacher forum and in particular the new Year 7 parents, specific questions on your child should be aimed at your Head of Year.

It has been a good start to the year. We have been ambitious this year with our building works plan which is overrunning, we are building two new classrooms in the Sixth Form and a large extension to the changing rooms for PE but as a result, part of the playground is missing as a consequence. We hope to finalise these works by the end of September.

Over the past few years the students have been taught in bubbles, in one particular area with teachers moving around rather than students. We have decided to return to pre-Covid arrangements this year with the transition of students moving around from lesson to lesson rather than teachers. A plan has been carefully implemented for this as some students are not used to doing this.

Year 7 are on their pilgrimage to Canterbury today which includes a visit to the final resting place of Cardinal Pole (the last Catholic Archbishop of Canterbury). This is a chance for the year group to bond as a year group. It is a very enjoyable trip.

We have the school photographer in school on Monday for Years 7, 9, 11 & 12.

Our extra-curricular programme starts next week. If you are a new parent, consent is given to attending these clubs via a system called EVOLVE which is also used to register for these clubs. We have a variety of clubs including chess club, coding club which is very popular and a variety of sports, games and activities. We would expect all students to participate in at least two clubs a week. School is about more than sitting exams.

Two big events for next week: Thursday is Open Evening for year 5/6 parents and students who are seeking a secondary school place for 2024 and Saturday is an Open Day, we are the only school in Hackney having an Open Day. This is to offer a different time for parents with younger children and also it enables them to see the school and playground in daylight.

There is a decline in school places across the whole of Hackney and other boroughs. Cardinal Pole are full in Year 7 and over number in Year 12. We are the only Catholic school that is full in Hackney, Islington, Tower Hamlets and Camden. Please spread the word to friends and family, they are very welcome.

Open Mornings run the following two weeks (week commencing 25th September), please come and see the school working, tours run from 9am-10.15am.

Next for Year 7 we have a Bible Mass next Friday 22nd and we have a specially written Cardinal Pole hymn which the students will be singing for the first time.

The new Year 12s are also having a bonding day next Friday which involves guest speakers and an escape room exercise in Stratford.

There will be catering changes after October half term as we have decided to bring this operation in-house. Currently we work with Chartwells but believe that we can make a better offer ourselves. With rising food costs being an issue, we need to be creative on how we deliver a good healthy offer. Further details to follow.

Year 11 had good exam results this summer, the details of which are available on the website. Exam boards returned to pre-pandemic marking for these exams which made it tougher for students. The Sixth Form students also did extremely well and will be attending a number of universities across the country.

Study spaces in Hackney are insufficient and the libraries cannot cater for large numbers of students. It is therefore our intention to open school for our Year 11 students from Saturday 30th September from 9am-1pm. This is not compulsory and no uniform is required to be worn. We will also be setting something similar up for the Year 13 students once our building works are finished both spaces will be supervised by our staff.

Parent Questions:

Do you provide a vegan menu? We do, our vegetarian option is always vegan. We do not have a huge number of vegan students in school (single digits). However, our catering manager has a good understanding of this industry. Agreed to display better labelling on the vegetarian options so students are aware that it is also vegan.

The Year 7 uniform bill is quite high (£200), in particular the blazer. Agree that the initial outlay is high and will review going forward. The School Council wanted to make some changes last year so there have been some updates to the uniform. The school works with an external partner (Roughcuts) and does not make any profits on these items. If financial assistance is needed when purchasing new uniform, please communicate with the Head of Year and the school would be happy to support parents. We also have a pre-loved option which is very good quality. More details to be given on this in the next parent letter.

Childcare provision available? No, no childcare as such but there are extra-curricular activities available for children to attend after school. The list is on the website. PSM for Year 7, Mr Taylor or Head of Year, Ms Tiberi is available to discuss any after school issues or concerns you may have.

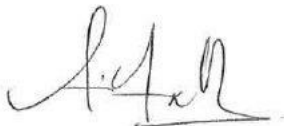
What are the Sixth Form arrangements for the canteen? Year 11 & the Sixth Form can use the canteen at break or lunchtime. We also have a pod in the playground as well as the canteen which sells quick eats like sandwiches or paninis. The Sixth Form can also go out at lunchtime but they cannot bring the food back onto school site. We encourage students to spend their money with local businesses rather than the big conglomerates like McDonalds. Years 10 & 11 eat in the morning at breaktime and Years 7-9 eat at lunchtime.

We are going into partnership with Paris Saint Germain (East London Hub for PSG) more details to follow. Hackney Royals are also going to be providing a basketball provision on site. The PSG offer will be given to Year 7s in the first instance and we will then phase in the other year groups.

Are there Instrument lessons? Letters have gone out to parents, please print out letters if reply slips are needed. Steel drums is one of the many instruments on offer which has a fully funded teacher coming in to work with the students.

When is the Year 7 Parents' Evening? This is on 11th January after the first set of exams. However, if you wish to meet with your child's HOY beforehand, please arrange an appointment directly with them.

Thank you for attending our first meeting. The next meeting will be held in two weeks' time.



Mr A Hall
HEADTEACHER