



Mrs Alison Pope, Headteacher

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope this letter finds you well and that you all enjoyed a restful summer break. As we embark on a new academic year, I am pleased to introduce myself as the new Headteacher of our school, for this academic year, while the Trust and Governing Body seek to appoint a permanent replacement for Ms Lovecy. It is an honour to join such a vibrant and welcoming community, and I am genuinely looking forward to get to know each and every one of you.

With over 20 years of experience in education, including five years as the Headteacher at The Priory School in Shrewsbury, I bring a deep passion for fostering a nurturing and inclusive learning environment where every child can thrive. During my time at Priory we have consistently moved to top three progress and outcomes in the county; this is with an SEN intake more than twice the national average. Moreover, as a local resident with my own children attending a nearby primary school, I am committed to ensuring that St Martins continues to provide high-quality, comprehensive education to local families.

Whilst my background is primarily in secondary education, I am excited about the prospect of working in an all-through school and developing this unique feature of St Martins. This opportunity to contribute to the growth and development of students at all stages of their education is something I find particularly inspiring.

Recent exam results

The school's most recent, final GCSE results have been published on the website and via the school and Trust's social media pages. These are not finalised until November and we are in the process of recalling and requesting remarks where we feel this is valid; therefore this figure will change. I did want to clarify that the published data is only attainment and not progress. This is because last year's cohort did not sit SATs exams due to COVID and therefore, there is no national benchmark for progress. It is not helpful to compare one school's attainment data to another as their cohort's ability differs vastly, as do year group sizes. Where you have a smaller school (such as St Martins) overall attainment outcomes are affected more by a small number of individuals, in comparison to larger schools with bigger year groups. The outcomes this year were broadly in line with target, with some very encouraging grades at the top end. If progress 8 had been a measure then it is likely to have been positive and potentially some of the best in the Trust, please do not fall into the trap of comparing attainment data between schools.

Senior Leadership Team and staff changes

ST MARTINS SCHOOL

Moors Bank
St Martins
SY10 7BD
01691 776500

reception@stm.318education.co.uk



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I am fortunate to be working with a strong senior leadership team, including Mrs Carol Jones as Deputy Head, Mrs Katherine Mooney as Assistant Head for SEND and Safeguarding, Mrs Zoe Mottershaw as Assistant Head for Aspire (Teaching and Learning), Mrs Stella Ellis as Assistant Head for Behaviour, and Ms Hannah Weaver as Assistant Head for Personal Development and Attendance. Additionally, I will be collaborating closely with our Chair of Governors Jan Edmondson and her team of governors. I am further supported by a very dedicated and committed teaching and support staff at all ages and stages, who are keen to secure the best outcomes for young people. There have been some new additions to staffing in secondary in English, Maths, ICT and Drama, as well as changes in staffing in some year groups and phases. I have [attached a list for you](#) to refer to. For any queries please contact your child's class teacher or tutor in the first instance and the Heads of House for anything more serious; any issues of a safeguarding nature should be discussed with the dedicated Student Support Services team.

Behaviour Expectations and Reminders

A key aspect of our school's success is ensuring that pupils are clear about behaviour expectations so that all can focus on learning in the classroom. A significant element of this is parental and carer support for the school's behaviour and consequence system, as it ensures a safe and productive environment for all. We have introduced a new routine to the start of all lessons, in our secondary phase (apart from practical PE) which includes an orderly 'meet and greet', with students standing behind their seats as they enter the room. This helps with a calm and focused start to lessons.

Our mobile phone policy is currently one in line with '**Not seen and not heard**' and I will also explain this to pupils as '**On site out of sight**'. As parents please do not feel under pressure to provide your child with a smartphone, if, for safety reasons you feel your child needs a phone due to travel to and from school, then there are a number of standard models which will allow them to receive and make calls and texts, without exposing them to the harm of always having social media at their fingertips. My experience is that mobile phones in school are distracting, unnecessary and addictive. They are often at the root of peer fall outs, disruption in lessons and around school, as well as causing real issues when we try to investigate incidents. We do have the right to confiscate phones if they are seen by staff. I have just moved my previous school to a policy of handing phones in, and I will be closely monitoring their predominance here.

A reminder that it is illegal for a pupil to have a vape or be vaping, in addition to them being damaging for their health. There will be serious sanctions for anyone found in possession in school.

As in previous years, we will notify parents and pupils if a consequence, such as a detention, is put in place; please note this is a notification and not a request for consent, as per the DfE Behaviour Guidance. Our Behaviour Policy will be updated this year, at Trust level but in the meantime please find attached the latest version.

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Attendance

A key focus for this academic year will be ensuring that our students maintain an attendance rate of 95% or above, as regular attendance is vital for academic success.

Curriculum

So you know what your child(ren) will be studying each half term please refer to the curriculum page of the school's website [Curriculum](#). This provides curriculum snapshots and overviews for each age and subject.

Uniform

Additionally, we expect all students to adhere to the [school's uniform policy](#). This is to foster a pride in their school community but more importantly to provide a level playing field and avoid peer pressure around latest trends and fashions.

This means no leggings, jeggings or non-uniform items – only school skirts or school style trousers are allowed in secondary. Jewellery should be kept to a minimum, with a maximum of one item per category, and artificial nails are not permitted. I realise I have already forwarded this to you but have reattached for your information. Please refer to the correct phase requirements for your child.

Road changes

Please note there is now a new 20mph speed limit on the road in front of school as well as double yellow lines, please do not park in these areas. New gates and barriers are also being added to the main school car park.

House Identity

Furthermore, I cannot stress enough the importance of pupils engaging with their House and extra-curricular experiences. Involvement in these activities and opportunities not only enriches their school experience but also plays a crucial role in building leadership skills and fostering a sense of community and belonging. We want pupils to have lifelong, happy memories of school and participation is key to this.

Parental survey

As with any Headship in the current climate there will be challenges and changes to make; your support and involvement are crucial to the success of our school, and I encourage open communication and collaboration. I would value you completing the short survey on this link so I can gather your views on shaping our direction and vision for the year:

<https://forms.office.com/e/L02FghcLCA>.

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Thank you for your continued support and trust in our school. Together, I am confident that we will make this academic year a successful one for all our students.

Kind regards,

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