EMMAUS CATHOLIC ACADEMY TRUST

ST. ANNE'S R.C. VOLUNTARY ACADEMY

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Dear parents/carers

Welcome to my December letter. This letter, again, showcases our great students and community. At this point, I would like to put on record that I am extremely proud of both the students and staff at St Anne's. The relationship between our great students and staff bodes well for the future. As a proud catholic school, this is a pleasure to see.

Catholic Life of the school update
As ever Mr Regan and his RE team have been busy ensuring that catholic formation opportunities are part of the St Anne's offer.

- During Advent we have being praying together as we prepare for the feast of Christmas. We began by setting up our school nativity cribs, advent wreath and Christmas trees as visible reminders of the liturgical season. HOY led assemblies on the meaning and importance of advent and our gospel-based form prayers were based on the advent Sunday gospel readings. Additionally, forms have being using advent meditations in their visits to our school chapel each morning.

- On the last day of term, we celebrated our Advent Liturgies. The theme this year is welcoming people with love and respect. Yr11 students provided a real example of student leadership to other year groups by leading the readings and reflections. It's great to see student leadership in action.

- Our Caritas Ambassadors have been busy working towards our £1000 target for The Wellspring. It has been a tremendous team effort across the school with forms using their competitive spirit to come up with new and exciting fund-raising ideas. Activities have included Form Time PowerPoints educating students on the amazing work of Wellspring, an Advent calendar raffle, cakes sales, guess the baby and the teacher competition, Mario Kart tournament, Christmas movie screening, candy cane grams, a non-uniform/ Christmas jumper day and selling refreshments and a raffle at the Christmas concert. I am proud of everyone's efforts and thanks to all who donated via Parent Pay.

- The Lighthouse Group is now up and running each Tuesday after school from 3.15 – 4.15pm in the school chapel. During Advent, Beth from the charity *'Christians in Schools'*, has led sessions on the theme of preparing for Christmas during Advent.

- St Joseph's SVP have donated £300 to St Anne's most vulnerable children this Christmas. At times, all of us suffer difficulties and we only get through life by supporting each other. The SVP society was set up in 1833 for this very reason, to offer help and support and we as a community are enormously grateful for this support. We appreciate this act of kindness.

- Finally, we are pleased that, overall, Yr11 have performed well in their RE mock. There is still lots of work to be done but they are moving in the right direction, towards success in their GCSE exams!

Safeguarding
Mental health is 'real' and probably affects most people to some degree at some time in their lives so it's important to understand when you may need to get some help with how you are feeling, or to know when you may be experiencing a more serious problem. It is quite normal to feel worried, anxious, or upset when things don't go as you hope or planned. Christmas time can heighten these emotions so it's important to know the support available when school is closed. I list important contacts below for your perusal.

- **Kooth.com**: Free, safe and anonymous online support to support with mental health
- **Samaritans**: Available 24 hours a day 365 days a year. Call 0116 123 or email
- **BEAT Youthline**: Support for those struggling with eating disorder. The help line is 0808 801 0711
- **HOPELINEUK**: For young people experiencing suicidal thoughts. Call 0800068 4141
- **SHOUT**: Confidential 24/7 message support for those struggling to cope or if in crisis. Text 85258
- **Childline**: Confidential telephone counselling service open 24 hours a day; help line 0800 1111

Additionally, there are various avenues to support parents with children with mental health concerns

- **Samaritans**: Call 0116 123 24 hours a day
- **Childline:** Call 0800 1111 24 hours a day
- **Young Minds parent Helpline**: Call 0808 802 5544

Misuse of social media
The pastoral team have noted an increase in peer issues starting online and are making their way into school, particularly within Yr7 & Yr8. School sanctions when bullying or unkind behaviour happens between students online. However, we would ask that parents and carers support us by regularly checking your child's phone and social media accounts. Students have been advised through assemblies and form time to ensure they are not part of large group chats on any social media platforms and to always be **kind** on social media.

Attendance
The pastoral team were thrilled to join students at our end of term rewards trip to the panto. Students with excellent attendance and behaviour were eligible to attend the Peter Pan panto at Stockport Plaza and had a fantastic time (oh yes, they did!). Well done to all students whose behaviour and attendance enabled them to be rewarded this half term.

In our end of term rewards assemblies, we celebrated excellent attendance by recognising students with attendance certificates. Students with excellent attendance achieve higher outcomes and therefore, have more options available to them. As a Catholic school, we strive to ensure that our students achieve their best possible outcomes so that they are able to live enriched lives. Students who leave with five Grade 7's at GCSE will earn £350,000 more over their lifetime than students who leave with five Grade 4's, meaning that your child's attendance directly impacts on their achievement and therefore, their future earning potential and life chances.

Staff INSET. A focus on our new Literacy Strategy 'POWER'
At the end of November in our staff INSET, Miss Scanlan launched our whole school literacy strategy which is called *'POWER'*. This acronym stands for the following: **P**owerful knowledge, **O**racy to express ideas, **W**riting to communicate effectively, **E**xplicitly taught vocabulary and **R**eading for pleasure and the aim of

this unique literacy strategy is to transform the way our students improve their literacy. Ensuring that our students are literate is a strategic objective of St Anne's. The POWER strategy encompasses all strands of literacy which are vital for our students to be able to access the curriculum and learn about the world around them. Parents can support the POWER strategy by encouraging pupils to read more widely at home.

Curriculum update: English

- *Sparx Reader.* This has been introduced in KS3 classes and all students have been given weekly Sparx Reader homework where they read their chosen book and are quizzed after each section. We have already seen success with this after just one week and we use it to monitor reading habits and identify where students need support. Reading is essential to accessing our knowledge rich curriculum and we thank all parents and carers for their support with reading homework.

- *Reading opportunities.* This month, we celebrated Non-Fiction during Literacy Form Times where students read news articles on current events. A quiz took place each week: Well done to Mr Gallagher's form who are clearly very aware of what is happening around the world in the news! In December, we will be celebrating '*Jolabokaflod'* around school. Staff and students will bring books in to swap, share and read to celebrate the Icelandic tradition of exchanging books at Christmas.

Curriculum update: Health and Social Care

Yr10 and Yr11 Health and Social Care students planned a variety of creative tasks for members of the Coach House Church as part of their GCSE NEA assessment, which is worth 30% of their GCSE. They worked with members of the church community and delivered these tasks over two afternoon sessions, demonstrating their positive communication skills, ability to interact with others and adapt tasks for the needs of individuals. The students showed resilience, determination, and ambition throughout the sessions. Pastor Andy, fed back on how fantastic and engaging all our students were, and feedback from the church said they *"were a credit to the school".* It is always pleasing to hear such positive comments from external sources about the great children of St Anne's!

Yr11 update

Overall Yr11 students have worked hard since September and have conducted themselves brilliantly in their Mock exams. Many staff have commented to me about their maturity and focus. Well done Yr11! I ask that parents praise their efforts and I pray that they have done themselves justice. They must now have a well-deserved rest over the Christmas holiday, so they are ready for the run-in to their GCSEs in May/June. Students will receive their Mock results in a special assembly on **Friday 12th January 2024.** There will be a further opportunity to sit a further Mock exam in English and Maths on **Friday 9th February 2024.**

We have had all colleges in from the surrounding areas to present assemblies with Yr11 with regards to post-16 provision. Most college applications are due by the **end of January** and students should have had discussions with the Careers Advisor. We have also begun our business breakfasts with representatives from various workplace sectors. Recent guests included a marketing manager from a Creative Marketing agency and the other with JMW Solicitors. Remember that St Anne's aspires for all our children. If you would be willing to speak to our pupils about your business at one of these breakfasts, please contact Mrs Simmons.

Well done to Mr Wroe!

In my November letter, there was a profile of Mr Wroe, our Art teacher. Well, I am delighted to report that Mr Wroe has completed his ECT and is now a fully qualified teacher. He has developed massively over the past 18 months at St Anne's, and I am very proud of this and his attitude towards not only the teaching profession, but his relentless determination for the students at St Anne's to achieve their potential in Art. Mrs Simmons, his subject mentor stated, "*Mr Wroe has worked tirelessly during his ECT, improving the quality of the curriculum in Art to ensure that students have the best possible outcomes and experiences in lessons whilst developing their skills and knowledge".* Ms Sutcliffe stated that *"Mr Wroe is a fantastic role model".* Well done Mr Wroe! Here is to many more years working at St Anne's.

Staff profiles

In this letter I profile two members of our support staff.

- *Miss Tomlinson, Exams and Data Manager.* I joined St Anne's at the start of this academic year, taking on a new challenge and career change. In the short time I have been here, I am immensely proud to work with such a wonderful group of educators, and of course the students. They truly are at the heart of what we do! Prior to working here, I worked in early year's education, starting out as a young apprentice at 16. I enjoyed 9 years working in private day nurseries and left the early years setting as part of the senior management team to pursue this new and exciting opportunity. I consider myself a hardworking and very caring individual, who always strives to make a difference to others. I am passionate about working in education and helping students develop and become successful. My vision is to inspire the next generation to have faith and self-confidence in everything they choose to do. In my free time, I enjoy days out with friends, supporting my local team, Stockport County, whether that be attending Edgeley Park or like last season, Wembley Stadium. And going on hikes with my boyfriend and our mischievous puppy, Teddy!

- *Miss Kouser, Attendance Officer.* I have worked in education for the last 12 years. I went to university at the age of 30 and graduated with a degree in History and English Literature. I always knew that I wanted to work in a school but not as a teacher. Initially I began as a 1-1 Teaching Assistant and quickly worked my way up to a Higher-Level Teaching Assistant. At the same time, I set up my own youth group organisation, working alongside vulnerable young people, but, due to the lack of funding in the sector, I sadly had to let the groups go. A couple of years ago I was struggling to find the right direction in my career. My daughter reminded me how happy I was when I worked in the youth groups. I found a position as an attendance officer in a school in Oldham and, not long after, my position at St Anne's. This allows me to work alongside young people and their families, which I find thoroughly satisfying. St Anne's feels like a completely different school from when I first started; we are going from strength to strength, keeping the students at the heart of all we do. Outside of school, I love spending time with my family, especially my 22-month-old granddaughter. In the little spare time I have, I love to cook and sew.

Yr10 and standards

The majority of Yr10 students have started their GCSE studies with positivism and hard work. This is a vital year for all students, and we are currently shining a spotlight on all things Yr10 such as their academic progress, behaviour across school and their attitudes to learning. Now is the time to begin '*Preparing the Way'*, which has been the theme of our assemblies over the past few weeks. We are driving home key messages such as 'there is no substitute for hard work', making a concerted effort to reinforce positive behaviours and acknowledging their efforts and attainment in their subject areas. I am delighted the majority have embraced this. However, there are a significant number of students who are disrupting the

learning of others, acting immaturely in lessons and who are not putting enough effort into their studies. As a school we are meeting these students and their parents to ensure we quickly address our concerns and outline our high expectations. For clarity, Yr10 is a crucial year for students and their GCSE outcomes.

Personal Development updates

- *Prefects.* Mrs Simmons and I interviewed Yr10 students for the prestigious role of prefect. Being a prefect is a real honour and with the 'golden tie' comes a responsibility to uphold our school's SACRED values and be an ambassador for St Anne's. The standard of responses in the interviews was exceptional and we are excited for these students to start their roles in January. NB. During the interviews, I was delighted that when I asked, *'what was good about St Anne's?'* four of the most repeated responses were on improved behaviour, better teachers, better curriculum, and improved facilities. It was very pleasing to hear these responses. I can say that over the past few years these areas have transformed the school and have led to a safe environment, conducive to learning.

- *Step Into Christmas*. Our 'Step into Christmas' concert on Tuesday 19th December was an absolutely brilliant evening which showcased the excellent array of student talent at St Anne's. Students performed a wide variety of music in the first half with our choir singing Step into Christmas as well as musical numbers played by bands, duets, and some beautiful solos. In the second half students entertained audiences by performing the pantomime Robin Hood and the Babes in the Wood. There was lots of laughter, audience participation and enjoyment by all! A massive thanks to Mrs Simmons and Mr Donnelly for organising the evening. A strong community event showing the excellent relationships that exist between students and staff.

- *Student Council.* This leadership group is back up and running. This term each class voted for their form representative who all met to discuss positive changes we can implement on our journey to outstanding. In the meeting rewards and extra-curricular activities were discussed and a plan made to develop these in the new year. The class representatives will be working on their speeches over the break ready to present to their year group in assembly in order to have two representatives for each year group sitting on the Student Council in 2024. Watch this space!

- *3D Printing Science trip:* The Science department took 22 Yr10 students out on a trip to Print City Studios at Manchester Metropolitan University last week to do a 3D Printing masterclass. Students were given a tour of Print City studios and opportunities to view 3D printing equipment and to handle the various different materials used to 3D print and the products that can be produced. This provided students with a real insight into possible careers and to speak to student ambassadors regarding the degrees available to them. Furthermore, students used Autodesk Fusion 360, a computer aided design software program, learning how to design products using the software. The finale was a challenge: to use the software to design and render their own drinking vessel. Mrs Rogerson said, *"behaviour and engagement throughout the day was impeccable"* and the students learnt a lot about careers in STEM.

- *Stockport County Intervention:* Twenty of our students have undertaken a Stockport County community programme. During this programme students have learnt valuable holistic skills through classroom sessions and delivering coaching sessions to Yr7 students. As a reward for their hard work, students went to Edgeley Park, home of Stockport County FC. Students toured the stadium, seeing the home dressing room, sitting on the players' benches, visited the Hall of Fame and experienced the famous Cheadle End. After the tour, students delivered presentations to the SCFC Chairman, Trust Manager and Group Commercial Director. The students social action projects included fund raising ideas for SCFC in their local community. A massive shout out to all the students involved for showing

exceptional leadership qualities, improving their confidence and self-esteem, preparing their projects, and supporting peer coaching sessions in school. And a massive thank you to SCFC for their incredible work with our students. [And what a win on Saturday with an 8-nil win against Sutton United😊].

Sport update

- ✓ The Yr10/11 girls' basketball team played superbly in a recent Stockport School tournament. The girls were unfortunate to be edged out by Reddish Vale in a 3-game playoff final but should be proud of their 2nd place finish. Well done girls!

- ✓ The Yr9 boys' basketball team topped their group in the Stockport School tournament but were again unfortunate to be beaten by Reddish Vale in the semi-final playoff. A win against Cheadle Hulme for the bronze medal was confirmed with an outstanding 3-pointer from Blessing Bakili despite shouts of 'keep hold of it' from Mr. Andrews! Again, well done boys!

- ✓ The PE department and I want to formally express our thanks to Mr Sugden, our Business Manager, for helping to improve the standard of sports facilities at St Anne's. The students are enjoying our newly refurbished sports hall floor.

Finally…

Firstly, it is great news to receive an increase in students who have chosen St Anne's as their first choice of a secondary school. This is testament to the excellent work happening in the school and the growing support we have in the local community. Thanks for your belief in the community of St Anne's.

I always love to share good news regarding our wonderful community here at St Anne's. A few weeks ago, the mother of Emily & Aiden Eades brought in 4 trays of donuts and a massive bag of vegan choc cookies for the staff with a message *"make sure they go to the staff as they do a wonderful job".* Thank you very much. They were very well received! I love sharing these positive sentiments about the staff at St Anne's who work tirelessly for the children here.

As always, thanks for your support and I wish you all a very peaceful, happy, and holy Christmas and New Year!

Mr Logue
Executive Headteacher