12th September 2016

Dear Parents,

I am pleased to say that pupils’ have made a really positive start to the new school year and especially our new Year 7’s, who have clearly benefitted from the three-day induction in July. It is very important that pupils come to school on time, in the correct uniform and fully equipped for lessons and I want to thank parents and carers for their support in ensuring these school standards are maintained.

Once again, we returned to some excellent examination results with 73% of pupils achieving at least five good passes at GCSE, including English and maths. This is all the more impressive when it is seen against a background of declining GCSE results nationally as the government continues to make GCSEs more rigorous and demanding. The progress made by all pupils was equally impressive and significantly above the national average. I want to congratulate all our Year 11 leavers on their success which is a just reward for all their hard work.

We start the year with new staff starting at St Bede’s. We welcome Mrs Roundell (English), Miss Flanagan (RE), Miss Lingard and Miss Ashton (maths), Miss Bileby, Miss Chhadat and Miss Neary (science), Mr Crawshaw (history) and Miss Asbridge (PE). In addition, we are also joined by several support assistants. They are: Miss Thompson, Mrs McGovern, Mrs Shorrock, Mrs Fletcher, Miss Wilkinson and Mr Kent. Mr Griffin has joined the IT support team and Miss Pugh will provide additional support with child welfare. I want to wish all our new staff every success and happiness during their time at St Bede’s.

With some arrivals, there are also inevitably some departures and we said goodbye in the summer to Mrs Billington who retired after many years of service to St Bede’s and also Mrs Edmundson, Miss Proctor, Mr Daniels and Miss Farrington from the teaching staff. Mrs Whipp from our administration team also left us in the summer to begin a new career path. They leave with our thanks and best wishes.

I would ask all parents and carers to ensure that we have accurate contact details so that we can make contact quickly when required. I appreciate mobile phone numbers can change frequently for some and it is easy to forget to inform school, but it is very important for the welfare of your child that we can contact you if necessary. It also enables us to send out group text messages with information, prompts and reminders about events in school. I would also encourage parents to sign up to the school’s Twitter account (@StbedesRCHS) as this is a an excellent way of keeping informed about the huge number of activities that are taking place in St Bede’s. The PE department also have a Twitter feed (@StbedesRCHS\_pe) for sports fixtures.

On other housekeeping matters, I am asking parents not to park on the school car park to collect children at the end of the day. Some pupils will require parents to meet them at school because of mobility issues, but otherwise I ask parents, in the interest of safety, to park legally on the road and have their child walk to them.

Homework timetables are being sent out to all pupils this week and will also be published on the school website. If you have any concerns about homework, you can communicate with a note in the homework planner or, you may contact the relevant College Leader for more complex issues.

This year, we have quite a few changes to the College system and it is worth reminding parents of these: Plessington College will be led by Mrs Diffley. Mrs Diffley will return from maternity leave in December and, in the meantime, Miss O’Toole will continue to act as the Head of Plessington College. Mrs Jose will be also be supporting in this college. Rigby College’s leader is Mrs Donlon with support from Ms Whittaker; Southworth College’s leader is Mr Walsh with support from Mrs Lingard. Mrs Bilsborough remains as the Head of Arrowsmith College and will be supported by Mrs Wilson.

The school’s calendar is on the website and we will be able to publish the holiday dates for 2017/18 very shortly on the website too. There are some sites on the internet which state that they are ‘St Bede’s Holiday Dates’ however they are not. The only reliable source for our holiday dates is the St Bede’s website [www.stbedesblackburn.com](http://www.stbedesblackburn.com)

Two dates worth bringing to the attention of new parents are the **Year 7 photographs in school on Wednesday 14th September** and the **Mass of Welcome on Tuesday, 4th October at 6.30pm.** Another important date this term is **Open Evening which is on Wednesday, 28th September (5.00-8.00 pm)**. On this day school will close for pupils from 12 o’clock to allow us to prepare the school. Buses will be ordered for this time.

Thank you for your continued support.



**D Callaghan**

**Headteacher**