



Date: Tuesday 9th September 2025

Our ref: HEB/sjt

Dear Parent/Carer,

Re: Welcome

I hope this letter finds you and your families well. It gives me great pleasure to welcome all our students back to school as we begin a new academic year. A very special welcome goes to our new Year 7 and Year 12 students, and to their families joining the St Bernard's community for the first time.

As I begin my role as Headteacher, it is both an honour and a privilege to lead a school that holds a very special place in my heart. Having been a former student, parent, teacher, and member of the senior leadership team, I am deeply committed to the education of girls and to empowering every girl at St Bernard's to reach her full potential – academically, socially, and spiritually being well prepared for life beyond school.

"Our school's mission, inspired by Christ's words, 'Love one another as I have loved you,' is reflected daily in a culture rooted in respect, service, and justice. These values will continue to be woven into every aspect of school life from our achievement ladder to our everyday activities—shaping a community where all are encouraged to grow and thrive.

Working in Partnership

I strongly believe in the importance of a close partnership between school and home. By working together, we can ensure the very best outcomes for your child. To support this, we have included a **Parent Booklet** and a copy of our updated **Behaviour Policy** with this letter for you to read. The Parent Booklet includes key dates, parents' evenings, term times, and useful information for the year ahead.

We also invite all parents and carers to attend the **Information Evenings at 6pm:**

- **Thursday 11th September** – Key Stage 3 (Years 7–9)
- **Thursday 18th September** – Key Stage 4/5 (Years 10–13)

These evenings will provide valuable insights into how you can best support your child's progress. More information has been sent in a separate letter.

Communication and Support

If you have not yet set up your **EduLink** account which enables you to communicate with the school, we encourage you to do so as soon as possible. If you require any assistance with this or any other matter, please contact the school via office@stbernards.southend.sch.uk

Our school newsletter will be issued at the end of each half term. For now, please see the key dates for this half term below.

Important Dates – Autumn Half Term 1

- **Week Commencing 9th September:** Start of Year Masses (all year groups)
- **11th September:** KS3 Information Evening
- **18th September:** KS4/5 Information Evening
- **26th September:** Guest speaker in school day talking to students about revision strategies for all students •
- **6th & 8th October:** Year 7 Retreats
- **7th October:** School Photographs (Years 7-10 and 12)
- **9th October:** Year 7 Settling-In Evening (online with form tutors)
- **16th October:** Year 7 Harvest Mass
- **17th October:** Year 11 Leadership Conference
- **Flu Immunisations:** Scheduled during this half term

Further details for individual events will be sent out in due course.

School Developments

I am delighted to share some exciting improvements made over the summer to our school:

- The library has now been transformed into our new school hall, named in honour of **Sister Mary Stephen**. Sister Mary Stephen was the Headteacher of the school from 1976-1983 and was also a former student.
- The Sixth Form area has moved to rooms E31 and E32, with Mrs Owen, Assistant Headteacher for Sixth Form, now based nearby to provide more accessible support.
- The Reprographics and School Shop has relocated to S01, a larger space allowing for increased stock, including revision materials.

A huge thank you to Mrs Getty our facilities Manager, and the IT and Premises Teams for all their work over the summer.

Donations

If you would like to support our School Enrichment Fund which helps enhance student experiences through for example, improved sports programs and learning facilities, please visit the Enrichment page on our school website, where you can make a donation. Any contribution, no matter the size, will be gratefully received and will go directly towards enriching the education and opportunities we provide.

This year, I will be seeking more feedback from parents and students through surveys – your views are important to me and help shape the future of our school.

I am truly excited for the year ahead and look forward to working together to support your children on their journey through St Bernard's. May God bless you and your families.

With warm regards,



Mrs H Barnes Headteacher