



6 September 2024

# NEWS & VIEWS

Be the best you can be.

Executive Headteacher: Mr Jamie Foster

## Headteacher's Comment:

A very warm welcome to our new parents in both Year 7 and Year 12 and to parents of pupils returning this year. I would like to highlight the exceptional exam results the pupils achieved in the summer. Our English and Maths departments performed significantly above local and national benchmarks and the Art department achieved results in the highest percentiles in the country. Not only did the school achieve the best results in ten years and significantly above national data but there were many inspirational success stories: Poppy Lee and Jayana Mahmood achieved nine grade 9s, Anne Goddard eight grade 9's, Tomas Lourenco eight grade 9s and Athina Katsogiannou achieved eight grades 9's and two grade 8's. In our Sixth Form Louise Boreland, Daisy Chadwick, Varun Gupta, Aimee Tomalin and Elise Tullett all achieved triple A\* grades as well as over 100 of our students being offered their first choice university. Well done everyone.

This week's Headteacher Award goes to Vinnie O'Leary in Year 10, for completing his NVQ in sign language.

In other news, I met with all pupils in assembly and we discussed the high expectations we have for them and the need to keep getting the 'little things' right. We discussed why we will ensure high standards of uniform continue and introduced on the day sanctions for lateness. In addition, we launched the new House System and reward focus to foster our sense of community and enhance our character education program so students can be *the best they can be*.



## St Martin's School adopts a giraffe at Colchester Zoo

Two of our pupils Ravneet and Nithilany had success in winning the recent Colchester Zoo STEM competition. St Martin's School has officially been awarded the adoption of a Giraffe at Colchester Zoo. A plaque with the school's name will be displayed by the Giraffe pen and can be seen by all visitors to the zoo. The project was run by Dr Willis in conjunction with the KS3 Science Club as part of the school's extracurricular enrichment in the Science department. The pupils worked hard throughout the project to achieve their Bronze Crest Awards upon completion in addition to winners' certificates, we received a free online seminar for the Science club and tickets to visit the zoo. The pupils are looking forward to using their winning tickets to visit our adopted Giraffe!



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# Year 13 Leavers' Ball

This week we had the privilege of saying goodbye to our Year 13's who left us this summer. It was great to see them again and congratulate them on their A Level results, as well as wishing them luck on their next venture. The venue offered a hot buffet, great music, a giant chocolate fountain and a 360 video that was thoroughly enjoyed by the staff as well as the students. It was great to see so many students enjoying themselves before they go their separate ways and begin their next steps of their journey.

**Mrs Page Head of Year 12 & 13**



## Dates for the Diary

- 10.09.24 - Whole School Pupil Photographs
- 12.09.24 - Early School Closure 13.25  
Open Evening
- 13.09.24 - School Late Start 10.55

For PE fixtures please follow twitter @StMartinsSchPE for for further PE updates

### Word of the Week Week 1 **Illustrious**



**Adjective:** Well known, respected, and admired for past achievements.

**Sentence:** Jimmy Anderson retires after an **illustrious** cricket career.



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# 10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators SUPPORTING CHILDREN GOING BACK TO SCHOOL

Change can be hard for children to manage. Going back to school after a long summer break might cause them to feel uncertain about their friendships, school routines and relationships with new teachers. However, trusted adults play an important role in providing both practical and emotional support.

## 1 LEARN WHAT EQUIPMENT YOU NEED

Figure out a list of all equipment needed for the start of the school year, so you can comfortably get your hands on the necessary items in time. If children have any financial issues and receive free school meals, the school may be able to provide some monetary aid or offer other support.



## 2 COMMUNICATE WITH THE SCHOOL

If you notice that a child is feeling anxious about a change of teacher or school, arranging a one-to-one meeting with their new teacher can be a good way to alleviate some of the anxiety. Just knowing that they understand the child's worries and will be able to help them if the need arises can build the foundations of a good working relationship. Knowing that you can contact them with any queries can also be reassuring.



## 3 CHECK THE SCHOOL WEBSITE

There will be plenty of information about the start of term on the school's website to keep you updated. Furthermore, you should be able to find other useful information such as contact details for staff, important school equipment, clubs, and news about any special events on the school calendar for the year. It could be helpful to look through this with children for anything which might reassure them.



## 4 HELP TO MANAGE FRIENDSHIPS

If a child is feeling anxious about making new friends – especially if they're moving up to secondary school – it can be a good idea to remind them of what they could do or say when meeting new classmates. Investigating the extracurricular activities available could be a good way to open a conversation about their hobbies and pastimes, and joining such clubs could allow new friendships to be built on this mutual interest.



## 5 PLAN SELF-CARE

Talking to children about how they can manage their self-care can be an effective way of helping them understand its importance. This might involve playing a computer game they love with friends, a weekly visit to the library, getting to bed at the same time each night, or a range of other activities that support their wellbeing and provide the familiarity and safety of a routine that works for them.



## 6 MANAGE TRICKY FEELINGS

Explain that it's okay to have difficult feelings around returning to school. This can help reduce any shame or embarrassment a child might be feeling over these emotions. Emphasise that other children – even some of the teachers – will be feeling the same way. Consider practical ways to manage these feelings and help children feel more in control of their emotions. Some examples include fidget toys, breathing exercises or a notepad for doodling.



## 7 SECURE A SCHOOL UNIFORM

Parents and carers should try to buy a child's uniform for the new academic year well in advance of the new term (although allowing for potential holiday growth spurts) and give them time to adapt to any changes. Make sure they can comfortably change into and out of it for PE lessons. Double check the requirements for PE on the school's website, as some schools will also have requirements for PE kits.



## 8 PREPARE FOR TRANSITION DAYS

Ensuring that children attend transition days is a vital step in preparing for the new year. Some schools also have transition evenings for parents and carers to attend, offering extra opportunities to reach out for any additional support.



## 9 READ THE MENTAL HEALTH POLICY

If a young person struggles with their mental health, it's important to understand their school's mental health policy and provision to know what support is available. This should be on the school's website. A range of aid is typically on offer – from individual timetable amendments to group sessions on emotional wellbeing. You can then discuss these options with the child to reassure them that help is there if they need it.



## 10 LEARN ABOUT SEN SUPPORT

If a child has SEN and receives help in school, try to confirm exactly what support is available, to ensure they'll be having their needs met. If they're moving up to secondary school, it's a good idea to meet with the SENCO to ensure that all teachers receive the most relevant, up-to-date information about the child's needs and have a contact to liaise with if these change over time.



### Meet Our Expert

Amy Sayer is a freelance mental health trainer for schools, an author and a content writer. She is an Associate for Diverse Educators, a fellow of the Chartered College of Teaching and ITT wellbeing coach. Amy has previously been a SMHL coach, helping many different settings audit their mental health provision and support them to create and implement a strategic plan based on the specific needs of each setting.



#WakeUpWednesday

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