



St Mary's Catholic School

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where everyone can succeed



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Dear Parents and Carers

I hope this letter finds you all safe and well. We continue to remember in our thoughts and prayers anyone suffering as a result of COVID-19. We hope that you have all had a lovely summer and we are really looking forward to welcoming our Year 9 students next week on Thursday 10th September for their first day.

Following Miss Patterson's letter, I thought it would be helpful for me to get in touch before the students return next week in order to explain some of the practical arrangements that your child will need to be aware of in advance of their first day back. In light of the current situation and in line with government guidelines we have had to make several key changes to the running of the school day and student routines in order to ensure the health and safety of our students and staff. We would really appreciate it if you could take the time to go through these arrangements with your child before their first day back. This will hopefully help to ease any worries and reassure students in advance of next week. We will also be leading assemblies on their first day to fully explain student routines and expectations.

Year 9 Bubbles and Zone

Year 9 will form two student bubbles and students will remain in these bubbles for all lessons and social times. All Year 9 lessons will take place in the Year 9 zone (Green Zone) which was known as the 'RE Corridor'. Students will not be able to leave their zone and circulate around the school building unless going to their yard, their allocated toilets or to the dining hall/main hall for lunch. Where possible, students should maintain social distancing among themselves and staff will need to maintain 2m distance from students. The Year 9 zone will be known as the 'Green zone' and Year 9 students will be given a green pin to wear on the blazer indicating which zone they belong to. This will help staff clearly identify that students are in their correct year group zone.

Students will be remaining in classrooms whilst teachers circulate from room to room for lessons. It may take teachers a few minutes to set up for the lesson and therefore we would like to ask students to bring a book with them so that they are able to read during this time. This will help us to ensure that time between lesson changeovers is used effectively.

Social time and toilet areas

Year 9 will have their social time on the year 9 yard located between the DT and RE corridors and they should also gather here on a morning before school. Year 9 toilets are located in the RE corridor. Year 9 will only be allowed to use this toilet area and all other year group bubbles will be allocated their own toilet area. In case of poor weather, Year 9 will be using the Atrium for social times. Year 9 break time will be at 10am for 15 minutes. At the current time, in order to ensure the health and safety of our students, we will not be allowing any students to use lockers.

Lunchtimes

Year 9 will have lunch at the earlier time of 12:10pm. We have staggered lunchtimes in order to ensure that we can allow all students time to have their lunch in the dining hall maintaining safety measures and ensuring cleaning between bubbles. Year 9 lunchtime sitting will end at 12:30pm and they will then have social time on their yard until 1:10pm. Some hot and cold food options will be available in the dining hall however this will be limited and the offer significantly reduced at the current time. We therefore would like to encourage as many students as possible to bring a packed lunch and we ask for your support with this. It will allow us to speed up lunchtimes of each year group and allow for cleaning of tables/trays and chairs between sittings. Further information regarding payment for lunch is enclosed with this letter.



Travelling to school

We would encourage students to walk or cycle to school and to avoid public transport if possible. If a student needs to use public transport, of course, national guidelines mean they should wear a face covering at all times on this transport. If students are cycling to school, they should wear a helmet and bring a lock to secure their bike in the bike stand. There is a bike stand beside the student gate near the dining hall which Year 8 students will be able to use.

Entering and exiting the school building

At the start of the day, Year 9 students should enter the school grounds using the pathway at the left hand side of the school building. There will be signs to direct them and they should make their way through the school gates at the left hand side by the dining hall. They should then gather on their yard before they will be asked to line up and enter the Year 9 zone via the entrance at the end of their corridor. Year 9 should always use this entrance and exit to the school building and will not be allowed to enter in any other entrance.

Social distancing (2m) is expected to be maintained on the journey to school and we encourage as many students as possible to walk or cycle to school, avoiding public transport where possible. Those who have no option but to travel using public transport should maintain social distancing and wear a face covering.

Hand washing and sanitising

Students will be asked to hand wash regularly throughout the day (with sanitiser located in rooms/corridors/entrances and exits OR at sinks with soap).

Face Masks

It will be compulsory for students and staff to wear a face mask in communal areas and corridors. Students will need to bring their own face mask to school. We hope this should be fine, given everyone will likely already have a face mask due to wearing these in shops, on public transport etc. Face masks used by students in school should be plain in design, with no patterns or logos and they should be an actual face mask rather than other types of face coverings such as scarfs. Students should also bring a small plastic bag with them, to keep the mask safely stored, in their blazer pocket or bag, when it is not being worn. If you feel that your child is in this medical exemption category, please contact your child's Head of Year.

Equipment

For all our students to enjoy success at school and to reach their full potential, they need to be fully equipped for lessons. Some resources will be available in each classroom to be used by students within each bubble but as always students must come fully prepared to school and bring their own equipment each day. This will not only ensure that students are fully equipped and ready to learn but also it will minimise the sharing of resources between students.

- All students must have a dark-coloured, practical A4-sized school bag (or bigger) which should not be a fashion item
- Mobile phones must be switched off and out of sight during the school day
- All students must have two pens, a pencil, rubber, ruler, protractor and a calculator
- All students must carry their planner and fill this in every lesson. This will be given out on their first day.

St Mary's uniform

All students should attend school in full school uniform. This includes a navy blazer with embroidered badge, St Mary's school tie, a navy V-neck jumper with St Mary's badge, charcoal grey school trousers or, alternatively, girls may wear the custom-made school skirt, a standard white shirt. Black standard polishable school shoes must be worn and trainers, trainer-style shoes, canvas shoes or shoes with any logos, colours or accessories are not allowed.

Hairstyles, jewellery and make-up

Hair must be a natural colour and hairstyles are not to follow extremes of fashion such as shaved heads, tramlines, patterns or dyed hair. Only simple, plain headbands or hairclips are allowed. No make-up or nail varnish is to be worn or

carried in school. The only jewellery allowed to be worn is a watch and a pair of simple gold or silver studs which must be removed for PE.

I hope this letter reassures both you and your child and helps to give them an idea of the running of the school day in the current situation. As mentioned earlier in this letter, we will be taking the time in assemblies and in form time on the first day to clarify routines and expectations, to reassure students and answer any questions they may have. We appreciate that the return to school will be a nerve wrecking yet exciting time for our new students and there will be a lot of staff and senior staff around to welcome your child on their first day back and to help and support them.

Thank you in advance for your understanding and cooperation.

Best wishes.



Miss Lague
Assistant Headteacher Pastoral