

**St Mary’s Catholic School**

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*where everyone can succeed*

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**INITIAL GUIDANCE TO PARENTS AND STUDENTS WHILE STUDYING FROM HOME**

**Overview**

Studying at home while schools are closed, for a prolonged period of time, is far from ideal. Planning for this is new territory for the school. Therefore, we would hope that everyone can show patience with any early teething problems and recognise that we are trying something that we haven’t had to do before. We will keep our plans under review and seek student/parent feedback after an initial phase.

**Taking a break and looking after your well-being**

It is important that students take regular breaks from computers and don’t try to do too much without such breaks. When at school, they have a break every hour, to move from room to room, and longer at morning break and lunchtime. This might be a good rule of thumb – ie not to do more than 50-55 minutes without then taking a 5-10 minute break away from where they are working if possible, including getting some fresh air, water etc. They should have a longer mid-morning break and a good lunchtime break.

**Understandable home learning challenges**

There are various other challenges students face. Students don’t have their teacher to call on, nor are they working in a social environment with classmates. Space might be limited in the home. Students may have to share a workspace with other family members. Computers might well have to be shared. Not everyone will have a computer. Students or family members may fall ill. The school recognises all of these challenges and we have essentially told students to do their best, not to stress and not to worry about whether they are doing more or less than others. They need to look after themselves, first and foremost, support their families, stay safe and maintain phone/social media contact with friends in the light of social distancing. There is not an expectation that every piece of work set MUST be done, given all the factors above (and others no doubt) that may make this difficult at times.

**Recommended initial way of working**

If circumstances in the home permit, if at all possible, we recommend that students begin by trying to stick largely to their timetables, as teachers will be providing ‘lessons’ in time for their students’ timetabled lesson each day. This doesn’t mean students have to do the work at precisely the time of day on their timetables, given the many challenges outlined above, but we thought this initial approach would give some broad structure to their learning rather than a generalised on-line learning approach via websites. That may be required at times if on line lessons are not always available in every subject every day. Teachers will be working to this model of providing regular lessons each week.

**Navigating the website (via 4 key boxes on the front page, the left hand box being the key one for lessons)**

Students have written guidance and log-in details issued to them. These details are also on the website. Here is a brief overview of where everything can be found on the front of the website, to make it as simple as follows.

**Online School Lessons** – this is the main box where students log-in and follow a folder system to their individual lessons.

**Home Study Resources** – this box has a range of learning resources, if on-line lessons can’t be accessed.

**Recommended Links to Websites** – this is a range of web links for different subjects and will be added to over time.

**Free On-line Resources** – these are as the name suggests and will be added to over time.

**WE WILL REVIEW THIS APPROACH AFTER THE FIRST COUPLE OF WEEKS OF HOME LEARNING.**