



# St Mary's Catholic School

Benton Park Road, Newcastle upon Tyne. NE7 7PE

*where everyone can succeed*



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4<sup>th</sup> November 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

I hope that you and your family are well and have had a lovely half-term break.

Thank you again for your support so far this term. As you can imagine, it has been a very challenging time for our school community but everyone has come together superbly well to support each other. Our students and staff seem genuinely delighted to be back in school and there continues to be a lovely atmosphere. Our students continue to adapt well to all of the new routines and expectations and their behaviour has been tremendous since we returned in September; your children really are a credit to you.

Staff have also been fantastic in their support of our students, continuing to provide excellent standards of teaching and learning, with a real determination to ensure students catch-up with any work missed during the summer term. They have also been very committed to implementing the health and safety measures and routines that have been needed to keep your children as safe as possible, whilst also delivering as full a curriculum as possible for all year groups in school.

Further to this, as COVID cases have increased across the North-East and therefore, a number of cases have been confirmed in school, teachers and support staff have also been working very hard to provide excellent remote education for any students self-isolating at home, whilst also continuing to teach the majority of our students in school. We have received much positive feedback from parents and students about the quality of work provided for students at home. Thank you very much for this, we appreciate it.

***For the information of all parents, I have attached to this letter, St Mary's current plan for remote learning, for students who have to self-isolate and work from home. I hope this information will be helpful for parents. As you know, along with many other schools, we are also part of the Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust. Therefore, for further information, I have also attached an information leaflet outlining the Trust's approach to remote learning.***

As Parents and Carers, you continue to play an essential role in being vigilant in identifying any possible symptoms of COVID-19 and taking appropriate action. Please continue to keep your child at home if he/she develops any symptoms of COVID-19 and make arrangements for him/her to be tested. Please also continue to let the school know immediately should your child test positive.

For your information, since I last wrote to you on the 19<sup>th</sup> October, there have been 8 further positive student cases of COVID-19 at St Mary's. This includes 2 students in Year 9, 3 students in Year 10, 1 student in Year 11 and 2 students in Year 12. In the last 3 weeks, there have also been 5 further staff positive cases. As always, we have followed all Public Health guidance fully and continue to liaise regularly with Newcastle Public Health to ensure our health and safety measures remain effective. As a result, we are confident that we have identified all students who may have come into close contact with the confirmed cases during the 48 hours before the symptoms started. The parents and carers of these students were contacted immediately. For many of these cases, there were no close contacts at all, given the students had not been in school for the 48 hour period before their symptoms developed.

Finally, it obviously continues to be an ever-changing picture outside of school, with a new national lockdown beginning tomorrow, 5<sup>th</sup> November 2020. I am sure this changing picture may be unsettling for many members of our school community, as well as creating further challenges for some, including some students. Therefore, please do let your child's Head of Year know if there is anything further we can do to support your child or your family. **At present, as you'll know, it is the government's plan for all schools to remain open during the lockdown period. Therefore, all students should attend school as normal.** However, if the government's plan should change in any way, of course, we will be in touch. As always, we continue to review and update all of our health and safety routines very regularly, to make sure that we are doing everything possible to keep our students and staff safe in school.

Many best wishes.

Yours faithfully,

Miss Patterson  
Headteacher