

**St Mary’s Catholic School**

Benton Park Road, Newcastle upon Tyne. NE7 7PE

*where everyone can succeed*

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2nd January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

**Update: Year 11 return to school- Monday 11th January 2021**

Happy New Year to you and your families and I hope you all had a lovely Christmas.

You may have seen in the media on Wednesday evening that due to the significant rise in COVID-19 rates across the country, the government have now decided that Year 11 students cannot return to school next week as previously planned. The government have decided that to protect the health and safety of all, Year 11 students will instead complete **remote learning at home next week** (this will be Tuesday to Friday for St Mary’s students due to our planned INSET day on Monday) and they will **return to school on Monday 11th January 2021**. With the exception of Year 11 and 13, other year groups will now return from Monday 18th January 2021.

**Just to note that the details outlined above are the government’s current plan but as you know, this plan has been updated very regularly over the last couple of weeks and therefore, if anything further should change, we will be in touch.**

All students will be able to access high quality remote learning at home to support their Year 11 studies. This will include:

* Students’ lessons will be uploaded onto Teams by their subject teacher by the end of each lesson. These lessons will include additional written explanation and regular audio and video explanations as necessary, to further support students studying at home. Students will also be able to ask any questions via Teams.
* Also, on the school website:
	+ In the ‘Student tab’ and under the heading ‘Home Learning Resources’ there is a large bank of high-quality resources for every subject area at KS4. Students should use this bank of resources to further supplement their lessons.
	+ Also, in the ‘Student tab’ on the school website and under the heading ‘Revision’ there is also excellent and very detailed revision materials for our GCSE subjects. These materials can also be used as necessary by students.
	+ Finally, in the ‘Student tab’ on the school website and under the heading ‘Revision’ there are links to other useful websites that students can use for revision. Again, these can be used if necessary, together with the above.

If you should have any questions about any aspect of this, please do not hesitate to get in touch with your child’s Head of Year.

We know that some parents and students will be concerned about students not being in school, particularly during such an important examination year, but please be assured that we will continue to support all of our Year 11 students fully, to ensure that they achieve their full potential this year, despite the disruption that Year 11 students and other students have faced across the country this year.

The Government have said that vulnerable students and children of critical workers can attend school next week, if parents or carers have no other alternative. I ask that, unless you have no other alternative, these students also work from home for this 4-day period. As mentioned in my letter of the 18th December, I believe the real benefit of the staggered start is to significantly reduce the risk of students who may still be developing COVID-19 symptoms after Christmas, spreading the virus to other students. Furthermore, the reason the government have delayed the start for Year 11, as well as for all other students, is because the transmission of COVID-19 in the community is so high, therefore, for the safety of everyone, we ask students to say at home unless there is no alternative. If you are critical workers and have no other alternative, please complete [**this form**](Critical%20Workers%20Form%20Year%2011.docx) and email it to the school admin email address no later than 9.00am on Monday 4th January 2021. This will aid our planning for the week. For your information, any students in school during the first week will not attend lessons; they will complete the same online work as the students working remotely at home.

Further details re the plan for rapid COVID-19 testing, will be shared with parents and carers in due course, once further government guidance and resources have been received and once the substantial planning that is needed has taken place.

Apologies for the short notice about these changes to the start of school next week but, as I hope you will understand, this was very much out of our control.

Yours faithfully,



Miss Patterson

Headteacher