



St Mary's Catholic School

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where everyone can succeed



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12th July 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

I hope you and your families are safe and well.

As we approach the end of the academic year, I wanted to offer my **sincere thanks to parents and carers** for all of your tremendous support throughout this most challenging year. It is so important to us to have strong, positive relationships with parents and carers and we very much appreciate your support.

I also wanted to say a **huge well done to our students**. This has been an extremely challenging year for everyone across the country, particularly for young people, and I have been so impressed by the mature way in which our students have conducted themselves throughout this year. It has undoubtedly been a difficult time, but the resilience and determination that students have shown has been tremendous and we are very, very proud of their achievements this year.

As you will know, the national situation regarding COVID-19 continues to see a significant rise in positive cases and currently, Newcastle upon Tyne is one of the areas with the highest level of positive cases. We have seen the impact of this in school, with a rise in student positive cases in the last 4-5 weeks. This has resulted in a growing number of students having to self-isolate, either because they have been identified as a close contact to a positive case in school or a close contact to a positive case in their family/household. Despite this disruption, students are being very well supported by high quality remote learning, including live learning, whilst studying at home during any periods of self-isolation. Please do not hesitate to get in touch with your child's Head of Year if there is anything further we can do to support.

The **government last week published updated COVID-19 operational guidance for schools**, as you may have seen on the news. The guidance outlines the relaxing of many restrictions in schools from the point when the country moves to Step 4 of the roadmap on Monday 19th July 2021. However, given that this guidance comes into place in our final week of school before the summer break, **we will be continuing with all of our current health and safety measures through until the summer holidays, to ensure that everyone in our school community remains as safe as possible**. We will then plan for September in line with government guidance and will be in touch with parents before the start of the new term to outline updated plans.

We have outlined below some key dates and information for parents/carers regarding the end of term and the start of the new term in September.

Progress Day

- **Wednesday 14th July 2021** is our Progress Day for all students in Years 7 to 10 and Year 12.

We are delighted with the very high uptake for this day. Form Tutors are looking forward to meeting with parents/carers and they will be able to provide a really meaningful update on your child's achievement. If you have chosen for your child to work at home on this day, they will have remote lessons uploaded onto Teams for each lesson. Students coming into school will complete the same lessons. We very much look forward to discussing your child's progress with you.

Last week of the school year

- **Monday 19th July to Thursday 22nd July 2021** will be normal school days.
- **Friday 23rd July 2021** -on our last day of school before the summer, we will have a staggered dismissal for students, as is our custom. To support a calm and safe end to the school year in the current context, we have lengthened the staggered dismissal and students will be dismissed from school at the following times:
 - Year 12 will leave school following their last lesson in the morning, by 12.15pm at the latest
 - Year 7 and Year 8 will leave school at 12.15pm
 - Year 9 and Year 10 will leave school at 1.30pm

As parents/carers will know, during the last week of term we would usually have Activity Day trips, a whole school Sports Day and other activities but given the current context and health and safety measures, we have had to adapt these plans. Therefore, for the majority of the last week, students will be in lessons as normal, to ensure that we maximise as much learning time as possible. However, all year groups will enjoy an in-school Activity Day (on one day over the last week of term). During the morning on this day, students will have an awards presentation in form groups and then complete fun, subject related lessons with different activities, quizzes and challenges. In the afternoon, they will have a choice of different activities to attend, including an in-house cinema, sports activities and arts and crafts workshops. This will be a really lovely day for students to reward them for all of their excellent efforts this year.

Results Days

- **Tuesday 10th August 2021** A Level Results Day
- **Thursday 12th August 2021** GCSE Results Day

A further letter with details about Results Days and the appeals process will be sent to Year 11 and Year 13 parents/carers before the summer break.

Start of the new term in September

For your information, we will be having a **staggered start to the new term** as with previous years, to support a calm and safe start to the year and to support the in-school lateral flow testing of all students when we return to school in September. Therefore, **year groups will begin the new term on the following dates:**

- **Tuesday 7th September 2021**- new Year 7 and Year 12 students
- **Wednesday 8th September 2021**- Year 8, Year 11 and Year 13 students
- **Thursday 9th September 2021**- Year 9 and Year 10 students

As mentioned, we will be in touch with parents/carers at the end of the summer holidays with further details about the start of term in September.

Finally, we are currently collating lots of information about student achievements and we will be publishing an end of year 'Shine' bulletin to celebrate a selection of the many student achievements from throughout this year. This bulletin will be uploaded onto our school website for your information before the summer break.

I wish you all the best for a safe and wonderful summer with your families and we look forward to welcoming back all of our current students and our new Year 7 students in September. Thank you again for all of your support over the last twelve months.

Very best wishes,



Miss Patterson
Headteacher