



St Mary's Catholic School

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where everyone can succeed



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Dear Parents and Carers

4th January, 2022

We hope that you have all had a lovely Christmas and we would like to wish you and your families a happy new year. You may have seen the recent updates to government guidance for schools which were published at the weekend. The guidance includes some small changes which we would like to share with you in advance of your child returning to school this week.

Facemasks

From Sunday 2nd January it is recommended that facemasks are worn in classrooms as well as communal areas for all students in Years 7 and above. Therefore, when your child returns to school this week, they will be required to wear their facemask in all lessons during the school day, unless they are medically exempt. They will also continue to wear them in communal areas and assemblies. We would like to ask for your continued support in ensuring that your child brings a facemask to school each day. It is also compulsory for facemasks to be worn on public transport and therefore if your child travels to school by public transport, please ensure that they wear their facemask during their journey to school.

Attendance

School attendance remains mandatory and all the usual rules continue to apply. Enabling children and young people to attend their education setting regularly continues to be a national priority.

January Exams/Summer Exams

There are some exams for vocational and technical qualifications timetabled for January. The government have confirmed that these exams will go ahead as planned. Consequently, it is essential that students continue to prepare for these assessments. The government have also confirmed that currently, they still plan for summer examinations to go-ahead as normal.

Ventilation

As detailed in my previous letter, government guidance recommends that rooms are ventilated, as far as possible. This is considered one of the most effective ways to limit transmission of the COVID-19 virus. Therefore, we aim to ensure windows and classroom doors are open as much as possible. In order to maintain a comfortable temperature during winter months, we are allowing students to wear their coats and gloves in classrooms if they feel they need to. Students will not be allowed to wear coats when walking around inside of the school building. If students would like to wear a jumper under their blazer, this must be a school jumper and not a hoodie.

Close contacts and isolation

The isolation period for anyone who tests positive for COVID-19 has now decreased to 7 days, if negative results are received from carrying out two lateral flow tests on day 6 and day 7 of isolation. Your child can return to school on day 8 if they are well and if both lateral flow test results are negative. If positive results are received or your child is unable to carry out the two tests, then your child must continue to isolate for the full 10 days.

If your child is a close contact to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, they can continue to attend school if they do not have any symptoms but they must carry out lateral flow tests daily for 7 days. If they receive a positive result during this time, or have any symptoms, they must isolate and get a PCR test.

Testing

You will have already received information about our testing in school this week and our staggered return to school to allow us to do this effectively. Please ensure that your child arrives at school at their allocated staggered time, even if you have not given consent for testing. Lateral flow test kits will continue to be distributed to students in school and students should continue to carry out two tests weekly at home.

Thank you so much for your continued support. We are looking forward to welcoming our students back to school this week. If you have any queries regarding any of this information, please do get in touch with your child's Head of Year in school.

Yours faithfully,

Miss Lurge, Director of Student Support