



ST. MATTHEW'S
Roman Catholic High School

We Pray, We Care, We Achieve

13 May 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

I hope you and your families are keeping well.

I wanted to write to you all to share an update of what has been happening at St Matthew's during this time of lockdown across society, and to give you an indication of what we expect to happen during the remainder of the Summer term.

During these past few weeks, all our staff have been involved in many different ways ensuring our students are safe, well and happy at this time. Our teachers and support staff have been setting work online, making weekly telephone calls, carrying out home visits and ensuring students' work has been celebrated. Our business team have been supporting with free school meal vouchers, printing work packs for students, keeping our site clean and safe, providing IT support for families, ensuring queries are dealt with swiftly, amongst many other aspects that keep a school running smoothly.

Our in-school provision has been in place since the very beginning of lockdown, and has been open throughout the Easter holidays including all the Bank holidays.

Across all the subject areas, our teachers have been delighted with the work that has been returned to them. As a parent, I fully appreciate the efforts that go into supporting your child with 'home-schooling.' Thank you for supporting our teachers to keep learning at the heart of our work, allowing our students to continue to 'be the best version of themselves.'

Behind the scenes we have been awaiting news about returning to school as soon as we know it is safe to do so, as well as planning for the new academic year in September. We have continued to work in partnership with St Patrick's RC High School, ensuring the work we are doing is in keeping with the standards of an outstanding National Teaching School.

We have recruited a number of new teaching colleagues who are keen to work with us as we continue to raise standards. These include teachers of Maths, English, Science, RE, Art, PE, Geography, as well as a new Deputy Headteacher.

We have been working with all our teachers to ensure that the information that the exam boards receive about our year 11 students is a fair reflection of the hard work that they have shown whilst in school. We have also been working closely with colleges and employers to make sure our year 11 students are ready for the next phase in their education journey. Please be assured year 11 that we have not forgotten about your leaver's prom! Further information will follow.

Finally, we have begun our work to prepare to welcome our new year 7 students, and reassure them that even at a time like this, we will make sure they feel safe and happy at this important time in their lives.

I have never been more aware of Catholic excellence in action, and I have been so proud to lead our community at this challenging time.

Moving forward, I am sure you are aware, on Sunday evening the Prime Minister outlined his initial plan to move our country back to some level of normality. Following this the Department for Education published guidance for schools that detailed their expectations.

We have been asked that, potentially as early as June, Secondary schools provide some level of face to face support for Year 10 on a part time basis with small class sizes to allow for social distancing. The guidance (links below) outlines to parents and staff the reasons behind the plan.

Over the coming days we will explore how this can be managed so that Year 10 pupils can receive some in school provision, **if and when the government allow**. This will be a different timetable and school day structure to what we have been used to. Social distancing measures will be in place around the school and the full year group will not be attending school together. The health and safety of our staff and students will be our priority.

I know I can count on your patience and support as we tackle this challenging process. It has **not** been confirmed that Year 10 pupils will return the week commencing June 1st. With Government advice and LA Support, we will do what its right for your children and the school community when asked to do so.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-educational-and-childcare-settings-to-prepare-for-wider-opening-from-1-june-2020>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers>

As soon as I receive any further information to share, I will do so via our website and our social media platforms.

Thank you very much for your ongoing support.



Mrs Murden