



6th November 2020

HEADTEACHER'S UPDATE

I do hope everyone had a peaceful and restful half term. Perhaps for some it was a last opportunity to spend time visiting sites and venues. We are now of course in a second lockdown situation. This is going to be very difficult for everyone and brings many additional challenges as we all know. One of the few exemptions to this are schools. The importance of school and education to children is paramount even in these difficult times. School is of course as safe an environment as anyone can be in. We have outstanding systems in place which massively reduce the risk of any infection at school. While I fully understand the concerns of parents about sending children to school at this time, I cannot stress enough the potential harm of not sending them. Children miss out on so much when they do not attend school. It has huge implications for their long term prospects and of course the longer someone is out of school the more difficult it is to return, even if things were back to normal. Many of us are parents too and we understand these concerns. I honestly believe that we are as safe at St Cuthbert's as anywhere. Anything that can be done to reduce risk has been done.

There will of course continue to be some students who test positive for COVID-19. It is important to note however that nobody has contracted it here at St Cuthbert's. The situation is always that it has been contracted elsewhere and the student has attended school not realising they had it. We then have to act by informing close contacts in the same way that the track and trace system does.

We have now developed a system of remote learning which ensures that any students absent from school due to a self-isolation situation are still able to in effect be present in the lesson and not miss out on their learning. The details of how to access remote learning have been provided for all parents and all students have had training on it. If you need any more support then please do contact us for assistance.

Here at St Cuthbert's, the vast majority of students are managing extremely well with the systems we have in place. While it remains strange, it is surprising what you can get used to. There are also things we have learnt and may continue with even beyond the COVID restrictions and regulations. The students for example seem to like longer lessons and having more time in the dining room because only half the school is there at any one time. We will actually come out of this situation better and stronger for our experiences and what we have had to change and improve.

I do need to raise the possibility of year groups being on a rota at some point in the future. Lots of schools have already done this. This is not because of COVID or any risks, it is because many staff are getting told to self-isolate due to track and trace messages. We have so far managed to keep numbers affected low and cope with the absences. If we are affected in the same way as many other schools have been we would possibly have to use rotas where some year groups are in and others are having remote learning lessons. This would only be a last resort but it is a distinct possibility in the months ahead while the rules are the way they are.

I wish you all the very best during lockdown and hope you can access our Parental Information Evenings which will be available on the website from Monday 16th November. I am sure you will find them most useful.

REMOTE LEARNING

It is essential that should students have a COVID related absence that they engage in their remote learning. Knowledge Organisers and exercise books have already been sent home and should be used on day 1 of any COVID absence. Lessons will be delivered via Teams from day 2 of any COVID related absence (wherever possible). The remote learning guide (<https://scrchs.net/letters-home>) gives full details of the remote learning plans in place.

NOTICES

- Please do not send your child to school if they display any of the following symptoms or anyone in your household has had a test and is awaiting results:
 - **A high temperature** – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
 - **A new, continuous cough** – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours
 - **A loss or change to your sense of smell or taste** – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal
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- **Students must bring their own face masks.** We have given out a significant number of disposable masks this year and many are to the same small number of students who repeatedly need one. A charge of 50p will be made for students who need to purchase a mask.
- It is essential that all students are in **correct PE kit**. Details of this can be found on the school website and on the school Facebook page. Some students have taken to wearing items which are clearly not acceptable items of clothing and this must stop. Details of where the correct kit can be purchased are on the website. If students forget to come in their kit they will initially be given a warning but the second occurrence will lead to an immediate C3 sanction as they are unable to take part fully in a two hour PE lesson.
- Uniform – Thank you to all our parents who have ensured that our students are in correct uniform. Please can we remind you that trainers are not part of our uniform. We have also reminded students that they should not be wearing hair accessories other than for religious observance which we ask that hijabs are plain black.
- Whilst in form class there will be both **equipment** (including bags) and uniform checks.
- **Buses** – The Department of Education have updated school guidance regarding the wearing of face coverings on 1/10/20 stating: Children aged 11 and over are legally required to wear a face covering on public transport in England, unless exempt for health, age or disability reasons. Please remind your child that masks should be worn at all times on their journey to & from school, failure to comply with the TfGM transport rules may result in a bus ban.
- As positive cases of COVID continue to increase both locally and nationally, it is vital that we all follow the national lockdown guidance over the next four weeks.
- **Social distancing** - We would like to thank all students and parents who are adhering to the social distancing restrictions at this time. Can we kindly ask parents to remind your child of social distancing out of school hours and on their journey home especially if they are collecting siblings from other local primary schools or if they are in and around any recreational areas, in particular the Balderstone Park area.

- **Now that we have entered another lockdown phase it is essential that students arrive to school and go home immediately without entering local shops or taking different routes home.** Our local neighbourhood policing team will also be monitoring this.
- **Year 10 and Year 11 Parents** - On Monday 12th October the government made an announcement about this **summer's GCSEs examinations**. They are planned to go ahead from Monday 7th June until Friday 2nd July 2021, (though paper 1 in Maths & English will be 'before the May half term' though no dates have been confirmed for this). GCSE results day is Friday 27th August. There is no current published subject timetable, these will be shared with pupils as soon as they have been set by the examination boards.
- Year 11 students will be sitting GCSEs examinations in all of their core subjects. Year 10 students will be sitting examinations in their 2 chosen Specialism subjects.
- Supporting the preparations for these GCSE examinations, will be assessments in school. In November 2020 there will be some in class assessments, the grades that students achieve in these will be shared with you via their school report. In February/March 2021 the students will sit their Mock Examinations in the hall and again the student results will be shared with you via their school report. From April 2021 there will be lots of opportunities for students to practice exam papers. For any further information please contact Mrs Hill.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- November 10th: Year 7 Flu immunisations
- November 16th: Virtual Information Evenings for all parents in all year groups.
- December 18th: Early finish for all students at 12pm.