

St Gabriel's

Roman Catholic High School



September 2020

Dear parents/carers

First and foremost I would like to start by sincerely thanking parents for their support of students' return to school this week. Student attendance has been over 97% and we are very appreciative of, and certainly don't take for granted, the trust that this represents in terms of the arrangements made to re-open the school and keep students and staff as safe as possible. Thanks to the support and guidance you provided in advance of their return, students have been well-prepared for their return and we have been very impressed with the calm and mature way in which students have quickly adapted to a completely different way of operating as a school. I hope that students have enjoyed returning to school, seeing all of their friends and teachers again and settling back into classroom learning. It has been particularly lovely to see our new Year 7 students appearing to feel so settled after just a few days with us.

The National Approach to Keeping Secondary Schools Open

With the pandemic still not over, last week the government unveiled a 'tiered' approach to keeping schools open in the coming months. At the moment, all regions in the country are in 'Tier 1', even those in areas subject to 'local lockdown' restrictions, but should the prevalence of the virus increase then regional health protection teams could adopt different tiers as follows:

- **Tier 1:** All schools open (the current position, even in 'local lockdown' areas).
- **Tier 2:** Secondary schools to move to a 'rota-system'. For all students except key worker and 'vulnerable' children, the 'rota-system' would involve attendance at school for two weeks, followed by remote learning at home for two weeks.
- **Tier 3:** Secondary schools to close (except to key worker and vulnerable children).
- **Tier 4:** All schools (secondary and primary) to close (except to key worker and vulnerable children).

As a school, we are making preparations for how we would operate should our region move to a different tier at any stage in the coming months.

Current Teaching and Learning

Our priority this week has been to establish safe working practices in school and restore students' confidence as learners after such a long break from school. As you will be aware, there are several aspects of the necessary ways in which we are operating at the moment that will unfortunately mean, hopefully only in the short-term, that the education we provide is not the normal offer we would like it to be. Thank you for your understanding that in subjects like Art, Computing and Food, particularly in Years 7-9, we are limited in how much practical work is currently possible due to the use of 'zones' in the school building. In all subjects, the way that students and teachers are currently positioned in classrooms means that the full variety of normal approaches are not available. This is frustrating for both staff and students, but very necessary at present. We are also reviewing how we will mark students' work moving forwards as government guidance makes it clear that simply collecting in students' books and taking them home to mark is not the straightforward task it once was either. Whilst we undertake this review we are asking all students to keep their exercise books with them between lessons.

"I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full"

Justice, Tolerance, Forgiveness and Generosity

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Uniform

Thank you to parents and students for an overwhelming positive start to the school year.

We would just like to remind parents though, that children should be bringing a mask to school every day and we have asked that the students keep their mask on whilst moving round school inside the building for example, to the toilets.

Water bottle

In a further move to helping our environment, all students have been given a reusable water bottle. Please do feel free to use a marker pen to write your child's name on the bottle. There are water fountains throughout the building and all areas where students may touch, such as taps/fountain, handles and door plates, are being cleaned at regular intervals throughout the day. Please do not send your child to school with a non-reusable plastic bottle, but they may choose to purchase and bring their own reusable water bottle. Energy drinks are not allowed in school of any kind.

Parent pay

This is the school's preferred way for parents to provide students with money for lunches in school.

Thank you for your overwhelming support of our school community.

Yours faithfully,



L Corrigan
Headteacher