

St Mary's Catholic High School, Leyland

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YEAR 7 NEW STARTERS 2021

July 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am writing with an update on arrangements for September when your child will start with us in Year 7.

Starting high school can be a mixture of excitement, anticipation and nerves and I am sure that your child will be feeling a mixture of these understandable emotions. Although we haven't been able to run our usual induction programme we have, wherever possible, visited primary schools or held meetings at St Marys and tried our very best to keep you informed about the transition process. To that end, I hope that you have found the transition page on our website useful; it can be found here - <https://www.ismchs.com/parents/year-6-transition-2021>

School re-opening

As we know, the government has signalled that all legal restrictions regarding Covid-19 will be lifted in England from July 19. Even so, there are still certain expectations being placed upon secondary schools from September which will affect your child.

With this in mind, school will reopen for Year 7 only on Thursday 2 September at 8.45am. This will allow them to meet key staff, find their bearings in the new building as well as experience their first day at secondary school without other year groups and older pupils present. On Friday 3 September, Year 7 will again be the only pupils in school.

Staff will be highly visible in yellow jackets, directing all new pupils in to school on their first morning.

Lateral Flow Tests

All pupils in Year's 7-11 will be asked to undergo two lateral flow tests in school.

For many of our new starters, this may be a new experience. Therefore, on their first day, skilled school staff will be able to guide your child through the lateral flow test. When we returned from lockdown in March this year, we conducted over 1300 tests and pupils found the process both pain- and stress-free. The test involves the pupils swabbing themselves under the instruction of staff.

For this to happen, school must receive consent from you, agreeing for your child to undergo the tests in school. Consent can be given electronically, by filling in the form at the bottom of the following webpage: <https://www.ismchs.com/news/2021-07-12-september-2021>

Only if your child returns a positive lateral flow test result, will school contact you with instructions as to what to do next.

Public Health Requirements

Whilst the wearing of face masks will no longer be required in schools, I understand that some of our school community may be a little hesitant as we come out of the Covid pandemic. Therefore, if your child would feel more comfortable wearing a face mask when moving around school or in class, then they will be able to do so. We will review this as the school year progresses.

Similarly, the government is keen to stress that sensible hand hygiene and good ventilation is still recommended. With this in mind, we will still offer pupils regular opportunities for using hand sanitizer, and for doors and windows to be open.

Uniform

No doubt you are keen to see your child in their full school uniform on their first day at secondary school, and this is often a moment when proud parents take photographs! Please can I remind you that St Mary's has high expectations for all pupils in terms of uniform and appearance and, as you would expect, these expectations will be in force from the first day of the autumn term. This includes, amongst other things, no make-up/false tan, no extreme haircuts, no jewellery (including smart watches), black shoes (no trainers) and blazers. Jumpers will only be required from October half-term.

PE Kit will not be required for the first day.

The School Day

Year group bubbles are no longer required in secondary schools. Therefore, we have greater flexibility in arranging the school day. However, we have decided to keep one of the changes we introduced last year, and this is our split breaks and lunch. This means that at both break and lunchtime, Year 7 will only be mixing with Years 8 and 9, as Years 10 and 11 will have their breaks at a different time. Your child's school day will look as follows:

The School Day	
08:30am Staff Briefing 08.40am Movement Bell	<u>Year 7</u>
8.45-9.00am	Form
9-10am	P1
10-10.20am	Break
10.20-11.20am	P2
11.20am-12.20pm	P3
12.20-12.55pm	Lunch
12.55-1.55pm	P4
1.55pm	Movement Bell
2-3pm	P5

Staffing Information

The Head of Year 7 is Miss Wilson and will oversee all matters regarding Year 7. Another important member of staff for your child will be their form tutor. This is the member of staff who will see your child every morning and will be best placed to see how they are settling in during their first few weeks. I would encourage you to contact the tutor in the first instance if you have any concerns. The staff list is as follows:

Form	7S	7A	7I	7N	7T	7M
Tutor	Mr O'Hare	Mrs Silcock	Mrs Bennison/Mrs Morrissey	Mr Gill	Miss Porter	Mr Booth

Travelling to School

If you are intending to drop off or pick up your child, be aware that Royal Avenue can get extremely busy. Please consider stopping your car so that your child has a short walk to school, rather than directly outside the school gate, and be considerate of our neighbours in the local area.

If travelling on public transport, please discuss with your child the fact that some bus companies may still ask that face masks are worn. Please make sure your child is well-prepared for this.

It is always best when your child walks or cycles to school, but please remember that cycle helmets are compulsory for St Mary's cyclists.

Reading Challenge

Whilst the summer holidays should be a time for rest and relaxation, St Mary's is promoting a love of reading amongst its pupils. For this purpose, we have a dedicated webpage which highlights our Reading Challenge for the new starters. The webpage is full of well-known books which are free to read on line, and also includes details of our prize draw for the best 'Extreme Reading' photo that pupils submit. Details can be found here: <https://ismchs.com/learning/reading-challenge>


Contacting School

If you have any queries about your child starting school in September, then please contact us through the usual means. However, we will continue to ask that any visits from parents and carers into school are by appointment only.

It is possible, that the wishes of the government may change before September. If this is the case, I will write to you again over the summer holidays with how this may affect your child. Please check the school website and social media channels for updates and further details over the coming weeks.

From Thursday 2 September we will do all we can to ensure a welcoming and safe environment for your child. We are looking forward to them joining our community and providing them with the best possible opportunities to let their light shine.

Yours sincerely,



Mr P Thompson

Headteacher