

St Mary's Catholic High School, Leyland

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08 January 2021

INFORMATION FOR ALL YEAR GROUPS

Dear Parents/Carers,

Earlier this week the government announced the closure of all schools for the foreseeable future due to rising numbers of coronavirus cases in the country. The Prime Minister has stated that schools should be one of the first establishments to reopen after lockdown. For now, we have returned to remote learning for all pupils.

Critical Worker/Vulnerable Pupils

Once again, St Mary's will be able to provide onsite supervision for children of key workers, or those who may be regarded as vulnerable. However, I must stress that this provision should be viewed as a last resort for pupils. Government guidance says '*Parents and carers who are critical workers should keep their children at home if they can*' (DFE document: **Restricting attendance during the national lockdown: schools Guidance for all schools in England January 2021 p.25**). We may well need to prioritise which children attend if demand grows beyond what we can reasonably accommodate.

Remote Working for Pupils

Staff responded magnificently to providing online work for pupils during the previous national lockdown. With this latest move to online working, they have developed even further what they are able to provide for pupils in all classes.

This time, we would expect pupils to follow the subjects and the times of their ordinary timetable, therefore it is important that your child is ready for lessons at the usual time. Work for all 5 lessons a day will again be set through ClassCharts and, wherever possible, your child's teacher will be available for live interaction through Microsoft Teams. Further information, including how to access ClassCharts and Teams can be found on the school website here: <https://www.ismchs.com/remote-learning>

However, although we will aim to provide live lessons as often as we can, this may not always be possible for a multitude of reasons. Therefore, some work that is set may include elements of self-study or directions to appropriate resources, such as educational videos or tutorials.

In every sense this is normal schooling, from 8.45am to 3pm, albeit at home rather than in the school building. Your child's teachers are working tremendously hard during the day to provide stimulating online lessons. Whilst many teachers do work in the evening and at weekends, I have no expectation of them to be answering emails beyond the hours of a normal working day. Therefore, I would ask for understanding and patience from both parents and pupils that any email queries may only be answered at a time that fits around a teacher's daily timetable.

Free School Meals

This week all families who are entitled to receive Free School Meals have been contacted by the office. For the time being, weekly food parcels will be provided. We do not yet know whether the government will allow schools to order food vouchers. If vouchers do become available, then we will choose to use this option as we believe it offers families greater choice, but for now food parcels will be distributed to all who are eligible and wish to receive one.

Mass testing of Pupils

The government have explained this week that they expect schools to continue to plan for the mass testing of staff and pupils for Covid-19. St Mary's have received a number of testing kits and selected staff members are in the process of training how to use and administer the tests.

When we are confident in our abilities to run these tests then we will begin to conduct them in school. Initially, this will only be for those critical worker/vulnerable pupils who are in school during lockdown.

Further details for these parents will follow, but rest assured, consent must be given by any parent/carer before school has authority to run the test on their child.

Reporting Absence & Covid-19 cases

Although most pupils are working from home, it would help greatly if parents could still contact school if their child is ill and unfit to complete school work. This means that staff will not need to contact home to chase-up any absence from online lessons and teachers know not to expect them.

Although the new national lockdown will hopefully drive case numbers of coronavirus down, it is still possible that families could be affected. Can I ask please that if your child tests positive for Covid-19, or is asked by NHS Test and Trace to self-isolate, that you still inform school. The best way to do this is via the c19@ismchs.com email address. In this way, school will be able to track any infections so that when we reopen, we're aware of exactly who we can expect to return.

For any health-related concerns regarding Covid-19, please seek appropriate medical advice from the NHS by calling them on 111 or viewing this NHS website: www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19

Contacting School

We are now running school with reduced staffing. Although we are still contactable on the school telephone number there may be times when you do not get through immediately. Please bear with us. Similarly, in terms of any visits to the school, these should very much be avoided unless it is absolutely essential and then by prior appointment only.

Any queries regarding ClassCharts, online work or help regarding laptops or internet access can be made to the main office and will then be directed to the appropriate member of staff to deal with your issue.

Safeguarding

As a school, we deal with a number of pupils and families through our safeguarding team. The two main contacts for safeguarding at St Mary's are Mrs Gail Reader and Ms Lynne Turner. Should any parent or pupil need safeguarding advice or guidance during our closure, in the first instance, please email dsl@ismchs.com Mrs Reader or Ms Turner will respond accordingly.

Nurture and Chaplaincy

In addition, Anthony our Chaplain provides vital support for a number of pupils. Should it be needed, he can be contacted on chaplain@ismchs.com This email can also be used for any nurture-based enquiries.

Updates

St Mary's has recently moved website and app providers. Regular school updates can now be received through the Schudio App. Using your preferred app store, search for 'Schudio School App'. We can be found in the search bar as St Mary's Catholic High School. We will also communicate with parents through our usual channels which can be seen below:

	Website	www.ismchs.com
	Twitter	@LeylandStMarys
	Facebook	@StMarysLeyland

Once again we are all asked to play our part in this national crisis. We hope that the steps we have taken will allow some sense of normality to remain for your child, at least in regards to their education. Parental support is always appreciated and we have been buoyed by the messages of goodwill we have received. Many thanks for your continued understanding. We will continue to hold our whole community in prayer, and hope that pupils can return safely back to school as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Thompson'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'P'.

Mr P Thompson

Headteacher