



ST THOMAS MORE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

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By Email

16th July 2020

Dear Parent,

Using Government guidance we are planning for a full return in September. It has been a challenging year but we are optimistic that our return in the Autumn term will be both safe and healthy, and we have been working out systems and protocols to achieve the same. I would like to thank you for your support in ensuring that your child has taken advantage of the online learning.

School starts again on Monday, September 7th for most of our pupils – please look at the website for start dates for pupils going into Year 7 and Year 12. We will teach our pupils in Year-group bubbles, in dedicated zoned areas in the school. All desks will face the front. Keeping safe means that pupils will be asked to confine their contact to those within their Year group and this rule applies to, from, and at school. Dedicated rooms, such as laboratories and specialist accommodation, may not be available for lessons, so the curriculum content will be adjusted by teachers where necessary.

We are asked to encourage all our pupils to cycle and walk to school to avoid the crowding that occurs on public transport. In September, if your child has to use public transport s/he should arrive at staggered times, by Year group, as follows: **Year 7:** 8.00 - 8.15 am, **Year 8:** 8.15 – 8.30 am, **Year 9:** 8.30 – 8.45 am, **Year 10:** 8.35 – 8.50 am, **Year 11:** 9.00-9.10am and **Year 12/13:** 8.40 to 9.10am. However, those who walk to school or cycle can arrive any time before 8.45 am. The school day will remain the same and lessons will start at 9.10 am. Those who cycle are asked to take particular care on busy roads. It is advised that cyclists wear a face mask to reduce the impact of pollution and ensure that they use a safety helmet. Bicycles should be in a roadworthy condition, and have a lock so that bicycles are secure on school premises, as no responsibility can be taken for bicycles stored in the bike sheds. Children of the same household may arrive at school together if they are walking to school, and those that walk or cycle can arrive at any time before 8.45 am.

We want to avoid the possibility of parents crowding the school entrance and exits and compromising social distancing arrangements. Thus, if you plan to meet a child after school, it would be a good idea to specify a meeting place a short distance from the school. Please note, there is very limited space in the reception area at the front of the school, so please avoid coming into the school unless there is an imperative to do so.

When children are in school we will be speaking to them regularly about the importance of reducing transmission risk by following good hygiene practices, washing hands on arrival to school, at break-time and lunchtime, and not sharing equipment such as pens and pencils. We will also ask them to continue to walk silently in corridors, and ensure they keep their distance at pinch-points in corridors, and when queueing for facilities such as in the library or by toilets. When they use computers at school or change desks, it is a protocol for them to wipe down the area beforehand. We will have a ready stock of disinfectant wipes in school. Initially, there will only be a packed lunch style provision available to buy from school, and we expect many pupils will bring in their own food. Food should not be shared with others. We expect everyone to do their best to co-operate with social distancing and hygiene rules and breaches of the disciplinary code in this regard may lead to disciplinary sanctions.

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If children have any symptoms of Coronavirus eg new cough, headache, temperature and/or a loss of taste or smell, then they should not be in school. Please contact the school immediately if this is the case. Any children exhibiting symptoms of Coronavirus in school will be sent home promptly. Please make sure that your emergency contact number is up-to-date and that you are contactable, in case we need to discuss whether we allow your child to make their own way home, or whether you will have to come to school promptly to collect them. We undertake to provide test and trace support so that your child and other members of your households can be tested quickly.

Government guidance states that children should take any masks, visors, or latex gloves off when they come into school. However, children may wear a surgical face mask only in school (no other type is allowed) and gloves if they so wish to do. The latest advice is that there is no need for anything other than normal personal hygiene and washing of clothes following a day in a school. Therefore we are expecting children to respect the school uniform protocols.

If we require a meeting with you, we will offer the chance to meet over Zoom rather than bringing you into school, thereby reducing transmission risk.

If any of your household members are shielding or clinically extremely vulnerable, we would be grateful if you would let us know, so that we consider ways to ensure that extra precautions are taken. It is particularly important to update us of any health conditions and difficulties.

We want all children to come to school, but if children have to stay off because they have symptoms or because they are shielding, then we will do our best to provide remote education support.

Thank you very much for your support this year. I hope that everyone has the chance to enjoy a summer break. Please encourage your children to read and to undertake the homework that has been set for them. Those in Year 11 and Sixth Form will be having assessments in September and it is important that they revise for these.

With my best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'AR', followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Alex Rosen
Acting Head of School