



5th June, 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

Coronavirus update 15

Welcome to another weekly update to keep you informed about what is happening at St Margaret's during our 'repurposing' period.

Possible partial re-opening in June

Following the publication of detailed advice from the Government during half-term, our plans for partial re-opening are continuing apace. Risk Assessments are being drawn up, plans are being discussed, and all the time we are consulting with teaching staff, support staff, Trade Unions, our Health and Safety consultant and a large number of other bodies too. It's fair to say that our plans are not yet set in stone, and we continue to make adjustments in response to the feedback we are getting.

One key piece of guidance from the Government is that "*secondary schools should ensure that only a quarter of pupils in year 10 and year 12 are in school at any one time*". We are therefore looking at offering face-to-face support for a relatively small number of students each day – ie pupils will not be back in school on a full-time basis. The Government is also discouraging the use of public transport; since many of our students travel to school by bus, we are prioritising whole days in school instead of half-a-day here and half-a-day there, so that the use of public transport is minimised. Our plans for each cohort are currently developing as follows:

- For Year 12, we are looking at re-opening from **Monday 15th June**. Each teaching group would be invited into school for two specified full days between Monday 15th June and Friday 17th July, with two exceptions: larger teaching groups would be split; and where their qualification is worth more than one 'A'-level equivalent, BTEC groups would be invited into school for more than two days. We will be writing to all Year 12 students and their parents/carers next week with further details – specifically, which days would be set aside for which groups.
- For Year 10, we are looking at re-opening from **Monday 22nd June**. Each student would be invited into school for around four days between Monday 22nd June and Friday 17th July for support in their core subjects. We may not be able to arrange for that support to be provided by their normal teacher, but all support would be given by subject specialists. We intend to write out to all Year 10 families during the week beginning Monday 15th June setting out when each pupil would be invited in.
- There will be significant changes to school routines in order to accommodate any additional students on site. For example, students would largely be required to stay in one room, even at lunch-time; breaks would be staggered so that students can have some time on the large yard or playing fields without coming into contact with students outside their 'bubble'. An adapted Behaviour Policy will also be in operation. Further details will be sent out with the letter advising about timings.

- As was stated in the last update, we do not envisage that we will be able to open to any students in Years 7, 8 and 9 before the summer, although our ongoing childcare provision for vulnerable students and for the children of key workers will continue.

These plans are still subject to change, but I wanted to let you know how our thinking is developing. We will, of course, continue to share further details as they are agreed.

Online learning

As you will be aware, Mr Slater has led our online learning operation since its inception back in March. I'd like to say publicly how grateful I am to Mr Slater (and, indeed, to his whole team) for the sterling work they've been doing over this period. However, for the next two weeks he will be stepping back from that role so that he can concentrate on the construction of next year's school timetable. Dr Manwaring, one of our Assistant Principals, will be leading the team from Monday 8th June to Friday 19th June in the first instance.

Mrs Roberts, another member of our online learning team, would like to draw your attention to the upcoming 'Week of Work':

"Next week Oak Academy and Learn Live have teamed up to inspire the next generation through interactive and engaging live broadcasts direct to students. They are designed, primarily, to support Year 10 but will be useful for Year 9 as they approach the time they would traditionally be thinking about a future work experience placement (having chosen their Options). We are also encouraging our Year 12 students to engage with the content as they consider future choices.

"From Monday the 'My World of Work' careers lessons can be accessed directly through the Oak National Academy platform at www.thenational.academy. No registration is required and students can do as many lessons as they wish. Every day there is a different theme. Please refer to Show My Homework next week for more information as the week takes place.

"Since 2015, Learn Live have delivered over 350 live broadcasts and reached over 400,000 young people in schools, colleges and other educational institutions including Job Centre Plus. Over 2,000 schools and colleges have also engaged with the 'on demand' video content with live interactive chat. They will be providing interactive sessions with a wide range of employers from Tuesday to Thursday this week.

"The live provision is free to all students and parents, although you need to register by clicking the following link: <https://learnliveuk.com/my-week-of-work/>

"And as ever, the careers team is here to help you with any questions or queries about our Careers provision; please contact us at careers@stmargaretsacademy.com".

Online safety

We want to take this opportunity to remind parents of the ongoing need to ensure our young people are safe online, so please check the information we've put together on the last page of this week's update.

Free School Meals

Earlier this week we heard that the Government have announced that they would, after all, be providing Free School Meal vouchers for the half-term week for those who are entitled to them.

Those families should, therefore, be receiving two vouchers this week – one for this week, and one for last week.

As ever, if you have not received your vouchers, or if you have any problems with the system (which does seem to be settling down now!), please let us know through the usual e-mail address – admin@stmargaretsacademy.com

Year 8 and Year 9 options

Under normal circumstances, we would be writing to all parents in Year 8 and Year 9 around now to confirm subject choices for next year – and in the case of Year 9 options, we would have interviewed every student about those choices too. Regrettably that hasn't been possible this year.

We have written to all Year 9 families to confirm choices and/or to ask you to contact us to discuss choices further. **If you have not received a letter, please contact us as a matter of urgency.** Thank you to the large number of parents who have responded by e-mail advising of their availability for telephone conversations about GCSE options. I am sorry I have not acknowledged those e-mails yet, but I will be contacting those who have e-mailed in by 'phone during the first part of next week.

Year 8 families will be receiving a similar letter later next week. There is only a very small number of Year 8 boys whose choices cannot be accommodated, but again we will offer the opportunity of a 'phone consultation to those who fall into that category.

In the meantime, if you have any questions about options for next year, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

With best wishes for a peaceful weekend,

Yours faithfully



Stephen Brierley
Principal.

Stay Safe Online – Updated messages

We are deeply conscious as a school of the extent to which children will have increased their online activity time during this period, and so we'd like to take this opportunity to reinforce the importance of keeping safe when going online.

Here's a reminder of some top tips from Merseyside Police on Online Safety:

- **Use parental controls** Adding parental controls will allow you to monitor and limit what your child sees and does online. Visit www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls/ to access step by step guides on how to set up parental controls.
- **Start a conversation about online safety** Show interest and understand what your child likes to do online and who they like to speak too. To learn more about the most popular apps and games that kids are using visit www.net-aware.org.uk
- **Set time limits** During this period it is important that your child isn't spending too much time in front of a screen, so plan activities that don't include using an electronic device.
- **Set device-free zones** Only allow your child to use their device where you can monitor them. Don't allow them to take their devices to their bedroom.
- **Report** Make you and your child aware of where to go to report online crime. You can use the resources below to educate your child about how to stay safe online and be a good digital citizen.
 - Download home activity packs and use the resources to help you learn about online safety at home with your child at <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/Supporttools/home-activity-worksheets/>
 - Childnet provide online activities you can do from home, with a number of resources aimed at different age groups, broken up into age-appropriate categories explore different online issues such as fake news, bullying, strangers online and more. <https://www.childnet.com/resources/online-safety-activities-you-can-do-from-home>
 - Google have launched a resource containing online safety activities for the whole family. The programme is designed to teach children the skills they need to stay safe and have a positive time online.

As a school we are now utilising the Oak National Academy lessons and content from BBC Bitesize. Some of the content we have been signposting up until now may have resulted in your child accessing YouTube and we want to make sure you have as much information as possible about this platform. The following four links give more information:

https://beinternetlegends.withgoogle.com/en_uk/parents

<https://www.youtube.com/intl/en-GB/about/policies/#community-guidelines>

<https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-centre/social-media-guides/youtube>

<https://www.common sense media.org/blog/parents-ultimate-guide-to-youtube-kids>

...and these two links provide wider information about staying safe online.

<https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-centre/social-media-guides>

<https://www.vodafone.co.uk/mobile/digital-parenting>

Please visit the online safety area of the school website regularly (it can be found at <https://www.stmargaretsacademy.com/event293.php>), and if you have any questions or require further support please contact us via ITsupport@stmargaretsacademy.com