



3rd July, 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

Coronavirus update 19

Welcome to another weekly update from St Margaret's.

Before we go any further this week, I would like to say a sincere 'Thank You' to everyone who has contacted us over the last four months with messages of support, gratitude or appreciation. I've tried to acknowledge each one but I know there will be some I have missed! But we do genuinely appreciate the many positive messages we've received, and I often quote them in the weekly staff bulletin to encourage the team here.

Last week of term

Over the last couple of weeks, we've been opening the school to small groups of students in Years 10 and 12, in line with Government guidance. We've made arrangements for every week up to (but not including) the last week of term, as we wanted to keep our options open for the last week.

We're now in a position to share our plans for that last week. **All students in Years 10 and 12 should come into school on the same day, and at the same time, as they have done in the previous weeks.**

- Students in Year 10 will study a different subject in the last week of term (which will be one of English, Maths and Science if they haven't already studied one of those three).
- Students in Year 12 will study the same subject as they have done previously, but only for half-a-day; the second half of the day will be spent supporting pupils in their 'next steps' (eg looking through the personal statements of those thinking of applying for University).

We will not be finishing early on the last day of term, as we customarily do; students who attend school on Friday will have a full day, just like their peers who have been coming into school on other days.

Plans for September

I know I was not the only headteacher keenly waiting for the Government's advice to schools for opening in September – which, in the end, was published yesterday. As you can imagine, we've all been poring over it since!

As I've stated several times over the last four months, our top priority has always been, and will always be, the safety of our students, their families, and our staff. As we've been discussing various models for what September may look like, we've naturally wanted to ensure that our students get their full quota of face-to-face teaching; but we've also been concerned to minimise contact between students – particularly between students in different year-groups – as much as possible.

We're also being mindful of the fact that most of our students would normally come to school by public transport; the Government guidance explicitly states that the use of public transport "*by pupils, particularly in peak times, should be kept to an absolute minimum*".

Although we're not yet in a position to let you know about detailed plans for September, it is highly likely that the plans will involve 'staggered starts', with different year-groups starting school at different times of the day (and finishing at different times too). For some, that could mean an earlier start/finish, but for most a later start/finish is more likely. In the Sixth Form it is likely that students will not be required on site every day.

I anticipate being able to let you know more details in next week's Update, if not before.

Admissions, September 2021

Under normal circumstances we would, by now, have held our annual Open Evening, and been looking forward to supporting families of boys currently in Year 5 if they wish to apply for a place here. Sadly, Open Evening has been cancelled, and we have instead been discussing what might replace it.

We've taken the decision to hold an Open Evening, or a series of Open Mornings, or possibly just a virtual event, during the week beginning Monday 12th October, and will announce more details about the format nearer the time. The late date has been chosen in the hope of maximising the chances that we'll be able to hold an event onsite, rather than solely online – but hopefully it will still give families sufficient time to choose which school is right for them, as the deadline for submitting the preference forms is not till October 31st.

It is also likely there will need to be a minor change to our Admissions Policy. Most of the places in Year 7 are awarded on the basis of church attendance, and with churches (and other places of worship) having been closed since March, our processes are likely to need to be adapted somewhat. We are awaiting further guidance from central Government on this before we can decide how to proceed, but obviously any changes will be duly notified at our Open events in October, if not before.

Online learning

Dr Manwaring writes:

"We are now in a position to start rolling out Microsoft Teams for our students. This will allow us to pilot a larger number of live tutorials and to make use of Class Notebook. Class Notebook is a very powerful tool that supports online learning for live lessons, self-directed learning and our forthcoming Catch-up Programme.

"Microsoft Teams and Microsoft OneNote are both free applications that are part of the Microsoft Office 365 suite. The school provides licences for pupils to use Office 365 at home and they can log in using their school email address. Your child can use 'browser based' versions of these application but we recommend instead that they download Microsoft Teams and Microsoft OneNote to the device that they have been using for their online learning as this will help them with Catch-up from September. The Microsoft office 365 suite can be accessed using this link:

<https://www.office.com/>

"When teachers have activated your child's 'Team classroom', s/he will receive an e-mail informing them and it will be visible for them within the Microsoft Teams application. A number of teachers will be getting pupils to practice joining classrooms to access work over the final two

weeks of term, when this is the case they will be informed of this via 'Show my homework'. If your child experiences any difficulties with Microsoft Teams and Microsoft OneNote please contact us by email at the usual address, ITsupport@stmargaretsacademy.com".

Safeguarding

Dr Silverstone writes:

"May I take this opportunity to remind all parents and carers of the school's safeguarding e-mail inbox: safeguarding@stmargaretsacademy.com? This address is monitored regularly, and if you have any questions about safeguarding, whether you want to seek advice or ask a question, please do contact us. If the matter is urgent, however, and a child is at risk of harm, contact the police or other relevant service, such as Liverpool Children's Services on 0151 233 3700.

"Please also be aware that ThinkUKnow, the education arm of the National Crime Agency's CEOP service (Child Exploitation and Online Protection) regularly update their website with advice, guidance and resources relating to online safety and how to mitigate risks. As we come close to the summer holidays, when children may well be wanting to spend more time online, these resources may be useful to parents and families. Find them at <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>

"Finally, please be aware that the BBC have added to their Bitesize website a parent's toolkit. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/znsmyxc> has various sections aimed specifically at parents of secondary age children, while <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zcs9vwx> contains information about supporting your child coming back to school".

Onsite childcare

This week has seen a 51% increase in the numbers attending childcare here at St Margaret's – we've had, on average, over 20 students on site each day. It's been great to see them, but we are now approaching the capacity of this group given that a number of Year 10s and Year 12s are currently in school too. If your son (or daughter) is eligible to access this provision (for example, because one of their parents is a 'key worker') and you would like him/her to spend a day or two in school before the end of term, then please let me know as soon as possible (by e-mail to scbrierley@stmargaretsacademy.com) so that we can make the necessary staffing arrangements.

Maths Competition

I've has a number of entries for the Maths competition and it's not too late to enter! You can find the questions at <https://www.stmargaretsacademy.com/roomnumberchallenge.php> and have until **1pm on Wednesday 8th July** to send me the answers (to scbrierley@stmargaretsacademy.com). Entries are welcome from families as well as from students – it could be an ideal family challenge on a rainy Saturday afternoon!

As usual, the next update is scheduled for next Friday. In the meantime, do enjoy a restful weekend.

Yours faithfully



Stephen Brierley
Principal.