



10th July, 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

Coronavirus update 20

Welcome to another weekly update from St Margaret’s. I hope that you and your family are in good health and spirits as we approach the end of term.

This last week has seen a great deal of activity as many of my colleagues and I have grappled with the Government’s guidance for re-opening schools in September. We’ve had to work at speed, so haven’t been able to consult with others as widely or for as long as we normally would – please accept my apologies for that! And the plans we’ve laid so far **are not finalised yet** – they haven’t been ‘signed off’ by our Health and Safety consultant, for example, nor by our Governors – so there may still be changes. However, I appreciate that many St Margaret’s families will want to know what’s likely to happen, so most of this letter is devoted to that topic.

As ever, the top priority in our thinking has been the safety of our school community – primarily students and their families, and our staff. Because of that, we are proposing to make some major changes to the way school works. **These plans are only temporary:** we anticipate that we will go back to something approximating our pre-Covid way of working at some point in the future.

Staggered day

The Government’s guidance states that the use of public transport “*by pupils, particularly in peak times, should be kept to an absolute minimum*”. This has been a key consideration for us, because most of our pupils use public transport to get to school. We are therefore proposing to operate the following school day times:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Year 7	Start: 9:05am End: 3:20pm	Start: 9:05am End: 3:20pm	Start: 9:05am End: 3:20pm	Start: 10:30am End: 2:00pm	Start: 9:05am End: 3:20pm
Year 8	Start: 10:10am End: 4:25pm	Start: 10:30am End: 2:00pm	Start: 10:10am End: 4:25pm	Start: 10:10am End: 4:25pm	Start: 10:10am End: 4:25pm
Year 9	Start: 10:30am End: 2:00pm	Start: 10:10am End: 4:25pm	Start: 9:40am End: 3:55pm	Start: 9:05am End: 3:20pm	Start: 8:35am End: 2:50pm
Year 10	Start: 9:40am End: 3:55pm	Start: 9:40am End: 3:55pm	Start: 10:30am End: 2:00pm	Start: 9:40am End: 3:55pm	Start: 9:40am End: 3:55pm
Year 11	Start: 8:35am End: 2:50pm	Start: 8:35am End: 2:50pm	Start: 8:35am End: 2:50pm	Start: 8:35am End: 2:50pm	Start: 10:30am End: 2:00pm
Year 12	Start: 9:30am End: 3:00pm				
Year 13	Start: 9:55am End: 3:35pm				

Partly because we have missed so much school time this year, under these plans we will be slightly increasing the amount of teaching time (by 25 minutes a week). Boys in Years 7 to 11 will have six 55-minute lessons on four days of the week, and two 90-minute lessons on the

shorter day of the week (when they start at 10:30am and finish at 2:00pm). **One of their lessons on this shorter day will be PE**, and in order to avoid the risks associated with changing rooms, **boys should travel to and from school in their school PE kit**. When weather conditions dictate, boys can travel to school wearing training/active leisurewear appropriate for PE (*ie* track-suit/jogging bottoms or tops) and a coat, with their school PE kit underneath. There will be no changing facilities. Boys will need to bring a packed lunch on these days as we will be unable to provide hot meals in the canteen.

On the subject of uniform, in order to save St Margaret’s families money during what will undoubtedly be a financially-challenging time, we are also proposing to **make blazers optional** until we return to pre-Covid arrangements.

The Sixth Form timetable will be based on which ‘blocks’ the students are studying in. A Year 13 student taking Maths, Physics and Chemistry, for example, will only attend school on Wednesday (for all their Maths lessons), on Monday (for all their Physics lessons) and on Friday (for all their Chemistry lessons). This will further reduce the demands on public transport. On one of those three days, they will stay for an extra 20-25 minutes for pastoral support.

A table showing how we propose to revise the timings of the day is appended to this letter.

When they arrive in school, students will spend their day in one ‘zone’ within school and will not be permitted to go to other parts of the school (which means that we will **not** be using lockers next year). They will have a 15-minute break (either in the morning or in the afternoon), and a 30-minute lunch-break; during both breaks they may access the canteen and the large yard.

Start of next term

As you can imagine, we will need some time with the students to explain this (and other changes for everyone’s safety) – school will be very different for all of us in September! We’ve therefore devised the following schedule for induction in September:

	Morning	Afternoon
Thursday 3rd September	Year 7 (9am to 3pm)	
	Year 9 (8:45am to 11:45am)	Year 10 (12:30pm to 3:30pm)
Friday 4th September	Year 7 (9am to 3pm)	
	Year 12 (9am to 3pm)	
	Year 11 (8:45am to 11:45am)	Year 8 (12:30pm to 3:30pm)

Students should report to school in their school uniform (blazers optional) at the stated times. Lessons will start on Monday 7th September (in line with the staggered day outlined above). Year 13 will also start back on Monday 7th September: Mr Lawton will be in touch about arrangements.

End-of-term reports

In line with Government guidance, we will be publishing brief end-of-term reports later this month (during the week beginning Monday 20th July). These reports will simply confirm the extent to which students have engaged with their online learning. We will be happy to respond to any questions that arise from the reports during the holidays if we are able, or in September if not.

Onsite childcare

Next week is the last week of onsite childcare, which has now been running continuously for 17 weeks – 14 school weeks and 3 holiday weeks. A special mention to one student, who has been with us almost every day (including the holidays), and in doing so has become the first student in St Margaret's history to ratchet up over 100% attendance for the school year!

In common with other schools across the city, we will not be opening our doors for ongoing childcare throughout the holidays.

I am sure you would want to join me in thanking the many various teachers and support staff colleagues who have facilitated our provision over the time we've been open. Its burgeoning popularity is, I trust, evidence of its success.

Free School Meal vouchers

The order for summer holiday vouchers has now been submitted, and I gather the first few have arrived by e-mail. If you encounter any problems, please e-mail scbrierley@stmargaretsacademy and I will endeavour to respond – although I may not be able to respond as quickly as I normally try to.

Maths Competition

Thank you to those who have entered the competition. I'll announce the results next week as this week has been quite busy...!

I'll write a final Coronavirus Update next Friday. In the meantime, do enjoy a restful weekend.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Brierley', enclosed in a thin black rectangular border.

Stephen Brierley
Principal.

