

SBR/GEN/AM043



St Margaret's Church of England Academy

"Achievement by faith and work"

24th April, 2020

Principal: Mr S Brierley MA NPQH

Dear Parent/Carer

Coronavirus update 9

Welcome to a new school term! During this period of our 'repurposing' I am writing to parents and carers every Friday to keep you informed about what is happening at St Margaret's.

On-site childcare

This week has seen an increase in the numbers accessing childcare on site – from an average of 4 or 5 students every day for the first four weeks of our operation, to an average of 7 or 8 students every day this week. We have resumed our term-time activities, but still find time for other activities, such as some physical recreation (with social distancing duly observed). Today, the boys have made cards for the residents of a local care home, assuring them that they are in our thoughts; as I type, Miss Kinloch is delivering them on her way home.

If your son qualifies for (free!) childcare and you would like him to access this next week, please e-mail me at scbrierley@stmargaretsacademy.com for further details.

Also on site, two members of our Technology team have been using the laser-cutters we have to manufacture personal protective equipment for front-line workers. Over the course of this week over 400 items have been produced! Many thanks to Mr Richards and Mr Taylor for their commitment to this invaluable work.

On-line learning

Mr Slater and Dr Manwaring offer some early feedback from our [Parental Survey](#), which opened on Wednesday (and which is still open, should you wish to let us know your views):

"Many parents suggested online lessons would help pupils, for example using Zoom. We had investigated these at the beginning of the lockdown but became aware of a number of safeguarding issues so have decided we would not pursue this approach. In addition to safeguarding, some members of our community do not have suitable technology available at home for us to be able to offer this service.

"We do however recognise that pupils often need or want to ask a teacher about the topics they are studying so we are trialling a Subject Specific Online Helpdesk for the duration of one week for all year groups. This will allow us to review the volume and types of questions pupils need to ask and trial different methods of response. We have set up the Online Helpdesk for Science and pupils will be able to ask our Science teachers about anything they have struggled with whilst



Diocese of Liverpool

Aigburth Road, Liverpool L17 6AB Tel 0151 427 1825 Fax 0151 427 9430

Email admin@stmargaretsacademy.com www.stmargaretsacademy.com

Company registration number 8160433



completing their Science tasks questions by completing the form that is linked directly below.
<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=mqZi2EwOgUqS-SzIneqRhuGzNxEOv15BoEMXiDOlUqRUQUNUWfVNSUxPMFJHMDc1MkNSSUFFVko1WiOlQCN0PWcu>

“We are also reviewing a number of published video lessons as there are many available from a whole host of suppliers and some are excellent. We do need to ensure that any we select to use are good quality and fit with our current curriculum position but hope to make more use of these resources.

“A small number of parents have asked for more challenge and volume in the work set. We plan to address this by offering daily optional Additional Learning for those who would like it. We would also like to offer this as a trial, for two weeks in the first instance, beginning Monday 4th May. If you would like to register your son for this trial please send an email with the subject-line ‘Additional Learning Trial’ to ITsupport@stmargaretsacademy.com. For those parents who responded stating that the length of tasks was too long in some cases, we have reminded staff that the work set should last about 30-40 minutes per subject and as has been communicated to parents previously if a pupil has completed work productively for this length of time but not completed the whole task, pupils are encouraged to submit what they have done and move on.

“A few parents have identified that clearer instructions from the teachers would help the completion and submission of tasks and we will feed this back to staff today. We are also reviewing the format of assignment documentation. We will look at converting as many of our PDF documents to Microsoft Office documents so they can be edited and submitted by pupils.

“We also became aware that a number of pupils did not realise they have access to Microsoft Office 365, and can use their school email address and password to log into all the Microsoft office applications online (e.g. Word, PowerPoint and Excel). This is available on all devices including Chromebooks, Android tablets and smartphones and Apple iPads, and iPhones. There is another document available called ‘Microsoft Email and Office 365 Guidance’ which provides additional help for pupils in accessing these Microsoft applications.

Finally, a reminder to all pupils that if they need any usernames or passwords resetting please email our IT support helpdesk ITsupport@stmargaretsacademy.com”.

Safeguarding

Dr Silverstone, our Director of Pastoral Care, writes:

“First, I will take this opportunity to remind you that the school safeguarding team remains available to offer remote support should your son or daughter need it. Please email us at safeguarding@stmargaretsacademy.com, and we will do our best to help; if we can't, we'll try to point you in the direction of other agencies and services who may be better placed to do so.

“Second, I would like to point you to a blog that has been set up by Chris Cavanagh and the Liverpool City Council's Early Help Team: <https://www.cultureliverpool.co.uk/parenting-through-covid-19/>. The blog, Parenting Through Covid, covers areas such as mental health, parenting tips for home-schooling and creating and maintaining structure and routines; it also has links to free interactive online parenting guides for parents and families in Liverpool.



“Finally, please remember that form tutors send out weekly check-in emails to all their tutees every Monday morning, and we ask that your son or daughter replies to these emails regularly and, should they have any questions or concerns, then they can raise those with their tutors.

Free School Meals

You may be aware that a national system of vouchers is now being rolled out, so that families entitled to Free School Meals can continue to be supported.

It's fair to say that St Margaret's is not the only school to have experienced some difficulties with this new system! However we have now uploaded nearly all our Free School Meals families' e-mail addresses onto the system, and the first weekly vouchers should be delivered over the weekend (if they haven't been already). The vouchers are worth £15 per child per week. **Please let us know**, ideally on Monday, if you haven't received the voucher.

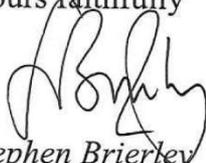
There is a small group of families who are entitled to Free School Meals but for whom we do not hold an e-mail address. I will be writing to these families shortly – although again, **please contact the school** if this applies to you. (A request to all families: **please do ensure we have an up-to-date e-mail address for you**. It is often our main way of letting you know what's going on.).

I'm aware that with the challenging economic climate we now find ourselves in, some more St Margaret's families may now be entitled to free school meals. You can find out whether you are eligible to claim at <https://www.gov.uk/apply-free-school-meals>. **Please do claim if you can** as St Margaret's receives extra funding for every pupil who's registered as being entitled to Free School Meals – which all helps!

Finally...

Thank you for your continuing support during these challenging times. As ever, we are here to support you and your son or daughter both academically and pastorally; do please get in touch if there is anything we can do to help.

Yours faithfully



Stephen Brierley
Principal



CALM.
FOCUSSED.
SAFE.



ST HILDA'S
CE HIGH SCHOOL



Diocese of Liverpool

Aigburth Road, Liverpool L17 6AB Tel 0151 427 1825 Fax 0151 427 9430

Email admin@stmargaretsacademy.com www.stmargaretsacademy.com

Company registration number 8160433

