

12th February, 2021



Dear Parent/Carer

Coronavirus Update 47

Six weeks ago we were celebrating New Year's Day and getting ready for the start of a new school term. Little did we know that as soon as the term started, we would be into our third national lockdown – and that once again we would have to close our doors to nearly all our students.

But this lockdown, most lessons have continued unabated. Getting to grips with the technicalities of live lessons has been a challenge for many of us (myself included!), but I would want to pay tribute to all my colleagues here – teachers and support staff – who have kept the show on the road; and I'd also want to express my heartfelt gratitude to all St Margaret's parents who have supported their child along the way as we've adapted to remote learning. Thank you so much!

Although we've tried our best to keep learning going during this lockdown, I – we – can't wait for students to come back into school as soon it's safe to do so. We're expecting news, possibly over half-term, about how and when this will happen. Once a national announcement is made, we'll need a day or so to understand how the Government's plans will be implemented in our context, and to consult with colleagues internally – but as soon as we've been able to do that, we'll let you know what's happening. As a parent myself, I know how important it will be to have a clear and early idea about when our children will be back in school.

However, and whenever, we return to school, Testing will play a central role in our plans...

Testing

I'm delighted to be able to report that we have carried out our first onsite testing this week! With help from Liverpool City Council, we'll be looking to test as many students as possible *before* we fully reopen after half-term – and we'll also be looking to test at least all staff on an ongoing basis once we've reopened.

The tests we're doing are Lateral Flow tests, which are designed to pick up some of the asymptomatic cases who would otherwise be circulating in our school community, potentially infecting other people. It would be really helpful if as many students as possible could be tested – the more that are tested, the safer our school site will be for everyone who uses it. We'll shortly be e-mailing you a Microsoft Forms document for you to give consent for your son or daughter to be tested; please do fill it in promptly if you're able to support this project.

Testing: [important information from Public Health](#)

Please be aware that because of the new strain of the virus that's circulating in our area, Director of Public Health Matt Ashton is urging Liverpool residents to get tested if they have any of the following symptoms:

- Diarrhoea
- A persistent headache
- Fever and chills
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting

See the Council newspaper's article [here](#) for further information.

Stop Press! Since drafting this, I've been asked to circulate a letter from Matt Ashton about this very subject. It's appended to the end of this week's *Update*.

Year 11 Mocks

Originally, we'd intended to hold a second round of Mocks either side of the February half-term. Regrettably this won't now be possible, even if we return to school shortly after half-term – we will need to focus on filling the gaps in our students' learning when they're back in school, and taking a week or so out for a full programme of Mocks would mean we'd have less time to do that.

However, we understand that some students may appreciate taking an exam so they've got an idea of how they're performing, and so they know whether their current learning strategies are proving to be effective. Assuming we're back in school next half-term, we're currently minded to offer Year 11 boys the chance to complete one paper per subject in their own time. This will be completely voluntary, and students would be free to take the paper or not in each subject, as they choose. They would be able to complete the paper under formal test conditions at home, or as an 'open book' exercise, at their discretion. The paper would be marked anonymously by a teacher (*ie* the teacher will not know whose script they're marking) and will be returned to them thereafter.

We would **not** use the outcomes of this exercise to inform any Centre-Assessed Grades we may be asked for – not least because we couldn't be certain each paper was a student's own work.

I should stress that this is our current thinking, and that it's predicated on Year 11s returning to school this term. We will, of course, keep you informed if we need to change our plans.

Parents' Evenings for the rest of the year

Following feedback, I'm pleased to be able to confirm the following calendar for the rest of this term:

Date	Year-group involved							Event
	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
6:00pm, Tuesday 23th February			✓					Year 9 Options Evening
4:30pm, Thursday 25th February			✓					Year 9 Parents' Evening
4:30pm, Wednesday 10th March					✓			Year 11 Parents' Evening
4:30pm, Monday 22nd March						✓	✓	Sixth Form Parents' Evening
Next term: date to be advised		✓						Year 8 Parents' Evening
Next term: date to be advised				✓				Year 10 Parents' Evening

Further details about each event will be sent to parents in the relevant year-groups in due course.

Consultation on the timings of the school day

"*Build back better*" seems to have become a slogan of our times. As we get ready for a time when we are free of many of the restrictions that have been in place on and off since March 2020, many people are starting to think whether some of the changes we've put in place out of necessity might actually be worth continuing with.

It's certainly a discussion we've been having as a school. Last term we introduced staggered days, one short day each week, longer lessons *etc etc*. Those changes helped keep our school community safe – when a member of the St Margaret's family has tested positive, generally we have had to ask fewer students to self-isolate. But the staggered days also brought some more surprising benefits: the atmosphere around school has been calmer and even more purposeful, and the students in Key Stages 3 and 4 have had much more space on the yard at breaks and lunch-times. Lunches themselves have

been less pressured, as only one year-group has been using the canteen at once. In fairness, other aspects (such as the longer lessons) have worked less well – we certainly don't want to have to schedule 'quadruple Science' on next year's timetable.

We're now at a point in our discussions where we'd like to consult with you about making a permanent change to the timings of the school day. On the last page of this letter is a diagram showing how we're proposing each year-group's timings work out for next year. The key features are:

- We propose to retain staggered starts, finishes, breaks and lunch-times. But the extent of the 'stagger' would be greatly reduced – all year-groups would start at some point between 8:30am and 9:30am (inclusive), and would finish between 2:45pm and 3:45pm (inclusive).
- There would be no short days (except in Key Stage 3 – see below), and no changes in timings across the week (so Year 8, for example, would start at 8:45am every day).
- There would be 35 periods each week (7 a day), each 45 minutes in length (an increase from pre-Covid arrangements). For Key Stage 3 students, however, there would only be 34 periods in the week – meaning on one day each week, students in Years 7, 8 and 9 would be dismissed 45 minutes earlier (they'd have no Lesson 7 on the schedule below). Which day of the week this would be would depend on the school timetabling process.
- The Sixth Form timetable would be set up in such a way that each week, almost all students have:
 - two full days in school;
 - one almost-full day in school;
 - one half-day in school; and
 - one day when they do not need to come into school at all.
- We would reintroduce a 15-minute registration period every morning, and two physical Assemblies a week. Monday morning would always start with an Assembly.
- We're also proposing to reduce the amount of choice in the Year 9 curriculum, as we want to ensure that all students have a demonstrably broad education before making their GCSE choices (in line with national requirements and Ofsted expectations). Students would still be able to choose whether they take French or Spanish as their main language in Year 9 (though regrettably they would not be able to take both languages).

I'd be interested to hear your views on these plans. If you'd like to comment, please do so by e-mailing scbrierley@stmargaretsacademy.com, to reach me by **9am on Friday 12th March**.

Support from Everton in the Community

Adam Howard, Volunteer manager at Everton, has written to us as follows:

"I was wondering if you would be kind enough to cascade information re Everton in the Community's [Blue Family Universal Campaign \(BFU\)](#) [...]"

"Our BFU service provides families who are struggling through this pandemic with a maximum of four lots of support. If a family meet our criteria, we can provide them with a food box on next day delivery. Each food box contains enough food to feed a small family for a week – with plenty of meat and fresh goods. Hopefully as the rate of community transition decreases we will also be able to complete fuel top ups for families too (which we have been doing throughout the pandemic). We aren't restricted by geographical areas and are able to help right across Merseyside. Indeed, to date we have helped families across all of the Merseyside boroughs, from the Wirral to Halton and Southport.

"To receive our support all someone needs to do is complete [this form](#) and we will contact them on the next working day. People can complete the form themselves, or someone else (eg a member of staff, a friend, a neighbour, a family member) can complete the form on their behalf. Since March 2020 we have received over 3,600 referrals have provided families with over 100,000 meals."

Sharing information online

Dr Silverstone writes:

*“Our third update from [Thinkuknow](#) looks at the sometimes difficult topic of **sharing information, images and videos**. Our children really are the selfie generation; many of them have grown up with the thought of taking and sharing pictures being more common than switching on the TV or speaking to a friend on the telephone. Adults can worry about this for any number of reasons – we might think young people are ‘image obsessed’ or that selfies can chip away at a child’s self-esteem if they feel they have to look a certain way. But we also often worry about the content of what children share or receive and what happens to those images once they have been shared.*

“Young people often share images or selfies and there is potential for some of those to be nude or nearly nude images. Young people share ‘nudes’ for a number of different reasons, and some situations are more risky than others. For information about the contexts in which images are shared and how best to respond, take a look at [nude selfies: a parents’ guide](#), which contains a series of information videos and links to other [Thinkuknow](#) resources.

“If your child enjoys being online and uses social media apps, games and more, it’s important you know how to protect their personal information and support them to make safe choices about what they share online. Read this [parent guide to personal information](#) for more information to support your child.

“Some of the most popular apps, sites and games are designed to make it easy to share information online. But once information is shared, you can never be sure who has seen it, saved it or shared it. If your child has shared something online they wish they hadn’t – don’t panic. Read [my child has shared too much online](#) for advice on how to support your child.

“As always, please do get in touch with us at safeguarding@stmargaretsacademy.com if you have any concerns about the issues raised in these weekly newsletters or anything else to do with keeping our children safe.”

Well-Being Day, Friday 5th February

Thank you to everyone who sent in journals of what they got up to last Friday. Some students even sent pictures too, and I thought I’d share a couple of pictures from two avid St Margaret’s bakers. Impressive or what...?!



We’ve also had reports of students doing shopping for other people, reading books (7 chapters in one case!), making a bird-table and even tidying their rooms! Well done to all concerned.

Valentine’s Day

A large number of students who wrote to me had done something for someone else on Well-Being Day – which I found deeply encouraging. What a great way to show love in action!

We tend to focus on romantic love on Valentine’s Day, but of course there are many other sorts of love too. Ancient Greek isn’t the only language that wisely has (or had) a number of different words for ‘love’ to distinguish between the different sorts we can show each other. At this time of year, I’ll often do an Assembly that aims to challenge students to show – practically – their love for someone else, perhaps by sending a card, or just by making someone a cup of tea. In doing so, we’re truly following Christ, who wasn’t ever backward in sharing His love with us when He walked this earth. Even though we’re not in school, Valentine’s Day is always a good time for us to encourage each

other to put our love for other people into action – whether it’s romantic love or another sort! So there’s a challenge for all of us this half-term...

Today is the last day of this half-term; school will be closed to all students next week. Live lessons will restart on Monday 22nd February, and I expect we’ll be in touch at the start of that week with news of when we will be re-opening. If not, I’ll look forward to writing again on Friday 26th February. Until then, do stay safe – and enjoy a well-deserved break from live lessons over half-term.

Yours faithfully

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

Stephen Brierley
Principal.

The Shape of the School Day from September 2021: Preferred option?							St Margaret's Church of England Academy	
08:30	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 11	Year 10	Year 12	Year 13	08:30
08:45	Reg/Assem'y							08:45
09:00	Lesson 1	Reg/Assem'y						09:00
09:15		Lesson 1	Reg/Assem'y					09:15
09:30	Lesson 2	Lesson 1	Lesson 1	Reg/Assem'y		Lesson 1	Lesson 1	09:30
09:45		Break		Lesson 1	Reg/Assem'y			09:45
10:00		Lesson 2	Lesson 2	Lesson 1	Lesson 1			10:00
10:15	Break				Lesson 2	Lesson 2	Lesson 2	Lesson 1
10:30	Lesson 3			Lesson 2		Break		10:30
10:45			Lesson 2	Lesson 2	Lesson 2			10:45
11:00	Lesson 4	Lesson 3	Lesson 3	Break		Lesson 2	Break	11:00
11:15			Lesson 3	Lesson 3	Break			Lesson 2
11:30		Lunch	Lesson 4	Lesson 3	Lesson 3		Lesson 2	Lesson 2
11:45					Lesson 3	Lesson 3		Lesson 3
12:00	Lunch							12:00
12:15		Lesson 4	Lesson 4	Lesson 4			Lesson 2	12:15
12:30		Lesson 5	Lunch	Lesson 4	Lesson 4	Lunch		12:30
12:45					Lesson 5	Lesson 5	Lesson 5	Lunch
1:00	Lesson 6				Lunch		Lunch	1:00
1:15			Lesson 5	Lesson 5	Lesson 5	Lunch		Lunch
1:30		Lesson 6	Lesson 6	Lunch		Lesson 3	Lesson 3	1:30
1:45					Lesson 6			Lesson 6
2:00	Lesson 7							2:00
2:15			Lesson 6	Lesson 6	Lesson 6			Lesson 3
2:30		Break			Lesson 6		Lesson 3	2:30
2:45		Lesson 7	Lesson 7	Lesson 7	Lesson 6			Lesson 3
3:00								3:00
3:15				Lesson 7				3:15
3:30					Lesson 7			3:30
3:45								3:45

Subject	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Comments	
English	4	4	4 + 1	6	6	1 timetabled Drama lesson in Year 9	
Maths	4	4	4	6	6		
Science	4	4	4	6	6		
RS	2	2	2	3½	3½		
Computing	2	2	2	Three options at 3½ each, ie: • 3 lessons in one year; and • 4 lessons in the other			
History	2	2	2				
Geography	2	2	2				
Languages	2 + 2	2 + 2	4				7, 8: French and Spanish; 9: choice
Technology	3	3	2				7, 8, 9: To include Food and Nutrition
Art	2	2	2				
Music	2	1	1				
PE	2	3	3	2	2		
Total	34	34	34	35	35	Includes 1 LfL lesson for all years	

11th February 2021



Liverpool
City Council

Dear Parents and Carers,

Thank you for your continued support in the fight against Coronavirus.

Although the number of infections in Liverpool has reduced, the rate of reduction is once again levelling out. The number of infections is still too high and we all need to continue to be careful and stay safe.

You may have seen some media around people in Liverpool being advised to get a PCR test if they have additional symptoms. For clarity, we've outlined these additional symptoms and when people should get tested.

Anyone experiencing the main symptoms of coronavirus must stay at home and get a test as soon as possible and remain in self-isolation until they get their results back. The main symptoms of coronavirus are:

- a high temperature
- a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot, for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours
- a loss or change to sense of smell or taste – this means you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

However, people who are sick with coronavirus may have other symptoms like the flu, including body-aches, headaches, sore throat and tiredness, shortness of breath, nausea or diarrhoea.

If you have these symptoms it is important you also consider booking yourself a PCR test. If you don't have the main symptoms of coronavirus, you do not need to isolate until you get your result, however you do need to continue to take the usual measures to protect yourself and others from illness.

If individuals haven't got symptoms they shouldn't use this route, and instead should go for asymptomatic testing in the usual way.

Advice on how to book a test

To book a test due to the above symptoms the process is the same. Go to the following website, <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>

When you are booking a test, if you don't have the classic symptoms, simply say you don't.

A few clicks later on the website, you can then choose the option which says: 'My local council or health protection team has asked me (or someone I live with) to get a test, even though I do not have symptoms'. Alongside the vaccination programme, testing continues to be one of the most vital tools to help us reduce the spread of infection.

We have extra testing capacity in the area for the next few days so we hope you will take advantage of this while it is available.

Yours Sincerely,

Matt Ashton

Steve Reddy

Director of Public Health, Liverpool

Director of Children's Services, Liverpool City Council