



ST MARY'S COLLEGE

8th February 2021

Dear Parent / Carer

As we draw towards the end of the half term, I would firstly like to thank you for your much-valued support of our remote learning offer. Levels of attendance and engagement have been incredibly encouraging and we are hugely proud of the response from students across the school. We recognise the pressure the current situation places on our children and families and through the regular contact of our tutors and pastoral teams, have heard many and varied accounts of the lived experience. Please continue to seek our support with any barriers that arise in engaging with the provision and we will do all we can to help.

Ordinarily at this time of the year we would be preparing for our Parent Tutor Day with Years 7-11. Given the current circumstances I have taken the decision to postpone the scheduled event on February 12th and prioritise lesson delivery. Therefore, please ensure that your child(ren) are prepared to continue their regular timetable right up until the end of this week. Remote lessons will begin again after half term on Monday 22nd February. Assessment of student progress and monitoring of attendance and behaviour will continue over the coming weeks and as we transition back to learning on site. Where specific issues emerge, you will be contacted. Assessment data will be used internally to ensure our teachers can plan lessons which directly respond to need, and our pastoral teams can continue to target support. We will review our external reporting and parental meeting arrangements once we have fully returned to school.

For those in examination cohorts, I acknowledge the particularly difficult situation in which we find ourselves. You will be aware that national consultations on arrangements for the awarding of grades in GCSE, A-Level and all vocational qualifications closed last week. We now await the outcome of that process and details of the systems that will be implemented in response. Our pastoral teams have been hugely impressed by the reaction of students in these cohorts and their commitment and attitude to learning thus far. This must continue. Working hard now and taking advantage of the opportunities presented will ensure that students are in the best possible place to represent themselves well in any assessments required during the summer term. Moreover, it will best prepare them for transition to the next stage of their education, employment or training. It is essential that students take ownership of this period, control what can be controlled and focus hard on their learning.

Alongside lessons, we continue to promote opportunities for students to stay involved with our community through SMC Study. This platform includes a wealth of guidance and support including practical steps to maintain health and wellbeing. It also provides a space to keep in touch and celebrate achievements together. In addition, our social media feeds provide direct access to a range of extra-curricular opportunities and activities so please stay connected and get involved. Further information for parents, including keeping children safe online is also available through our website.

We look forward to welcoming students back to St Mary's soon. In the meantime, take good care.

Yours sincerely

Mr D Perry
Head of School

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