



18th March 2020

Dear Parent / Carer

I am writing to update you on the current situation at St Mary's College in response to the spread of Coronavirus COVID-19. We continue to be directed by the Government and closely follow the advice and guidance provided to us.

It is firstly important to state that until further notice, school continues as normal.

However, we are monitoring the situation very closely and as measures taken at a national level evolve, we anticipate further impact on our staff and potentially therefore our ability to keep children safe and learning on site. We also acknowledge an increasing number of students that are being impacted by self-isolation and social distancing measures.

I would like to reassure you that we have been planning our response to these issues for some time and have a range of measures at our disposal. In the first instance these have been executed with a focus on maintaining access to school for all students able to attend. A consequence of these measures has regrettably been the cancellation of any trips, visits, school sports fixtures and on-site events until further notice. The next phase, which is now approaching, could involve partial closures which you may have seen already taking place across many schools in the region, or direction to close completely. As the situation at this stage is moving rapidly, I wanted to inform you of this so that considerations can be given.

In order to support any students that no longer have access to the curriculum on site we have developed and are now ready to launch an innovative sharing platform called SMC Study. This is currently being demonstrated with students and they have been asked to check that they are able to log in to the platform using any device at home that connects to the internet. The platform will work through their Microsoft 365 account which they can access by browsing to www.office.com and typing in their school username and password. Details about how to log in and use the portal will be circulated shortly alongside a 'how to' video so that you can support children at home. Access will be launched tomorrow so that students can become familiar with it in the first instance. Work will begin to be populated to the platform from Monday 23rd March regardless of closure status so that any students isolating at home can have access to a curriculum, their teachers, their pastoral support network and key educational resources including our Reading Cloud and thousands of e-books.

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Mr G Fitzpatrick

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ST MARY'S COLLEGE

If school closures are undertaken at any point then class level resources will be provided for all students by their subject teachers. It is expected that all students continue to work through their timetable as if they were in school and lessons will be set for every period of every day. We have produced guidance and tips for working from home that will be available through the platform and also circulated to parents in due course. We strongly encourage space for breaks and time outdoors (following Government advice) consistent with our school day and we will have mechanisms to maintain contact through our pastoral systems to support student well-being and address any concerns or anxieties. There will be guidance and advice through the core PE lessons on the remote platform for students to engage in regular physical activity, which is strongly linked to well being and health and something we wholeheartedly encourage. If you have any questions or concerns at this stage please contact your child's Year team in the first instance.

These are unprecedented times but we remain committed absolutely to supporting the children and families we serve. We recognise the great uncertainty and anxiety that exists for many and hold all of our extended community in our thoughts and prayers.

We will continue to update you as the situation develops over the coming days and weeks.

Yours sincerely

Mr D Perry
Head of School

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