



St Robert of Newminster Catholic School and Sixth Form College



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Head Teacher: Mr. D. Juric
Chair of Governors: Mr. G. Moorhouse

6th July 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

As ever, I begin by saying that I hope you are all well and coping with the current situation.

You will no doubt be aware that the government published guidance towards the end of last week on the opening of schools from September. The school is currently working through this guidance. We shall in due course share in detail our plans and risk assessments for opening from September with parents and carers, so that you can fully understand how we will be minimising any risk and what that will mean for the daily functioning of the school. However, I felt it sensible at this point to contact parents and carers with some initial feedback on the guidance, so that you are aware of some of the general detail.

The government's guidance is based around a decrease in the prevalence of COVID-19, the NHS Test and Trace system, and clarity over the measures needed to be in place to create safer environments within schools. The guidance goes on to explain the steps schools need to take to reduce risks still further, while ensuring that all pupils receive a high quality education.

As part of the implementation of a system of controls in order to reduce the risk of transmission, schools are asked to minimise the number of contacts that a student has during the school day, and to maintain distancing, as far as possible. The aim is to have all students back at school from September, although every school will also need to plan for the possibility of a local lockdown and how they will ensure continuity of education. St Robert's intends to continue to offer a wide and varied curriculum in school, wherever it remains safe to do so. We will also be addressing any gaps students have in knowledge and understanding, due to any learning they have missed over the summer term.

Within school, students will be operating in *year group bubbles*. Year group bubbles will be kept separate from each other within school as much as possible. There will be a continued emphasis on hygiene and cleaning. Schools have also been asked to consider their arrangements around transport, arrival/departure, breaks, lunch, etc. However, the guidance does recognise that individual school circumstances will necessitate different solutions and arrangements, and there will not be *one size fits all*. We are currently in discussion with Nexus over arrangements for scholars' buses. Clearly, the correct management of individuals showing symptoms, or any confirmed cases of COVID-19, will also be essential.

In line with the guidance, St Robert's plans to welcome back all students from all year groups from September. There will be some changes necessary for staff, students and parents/carers, but we will make everyone fully aware of any new systems or procedures. We ask for your support please in doing so. Students will need to be brought up to speed with the *new ways of doing things* too. To this end, it may be necessary to stagger the start of term very slightly for different year groups in order to ensure students are fully aware of how to function safely within the new systems. We shall let you know of any start of term arrangements before the end of this term, and if there is any staggering of the start of term, we do not envisage it at this stage being by any more than a day or two at the most.



Students should be commended on their efforts to keep up to date with their studies during the period of school closure. However, we look forward to being able to welcome all age groups back for face to face teaching from September. We will be sending more detailed information on how this will be achieved, as soon as it is ready. I am sure we all want to see students back in school learning, but we also want to see this happen safely. In the meantime, I include the following link to the government website, giving information for parents/carers on the re-opening of schools.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-in-the-autumn-term>

I wish you all well for the remaining weeks of term and we will be back in touch with you in due course.

Yours faithfully

Mr D Juric
Head Teacher

