



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

13th July 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

I hope this letter finds you all well. We find ourselves coming to the end of what has been a difficult year in many ways for all of us. I want to begin by thanking you all for your support during this period, and in particular by praising our students for the resilience and determination they have shown during this final term of the school year. We hope and pray for much greater certainty and stability from September, and we look forward to welcoming back all our students safely for the new school year. We shall be sharing with you our plan for opening from September on the school website shortly. I shall therefore not get into the detail in this letter, other than to confirm that **the school is open to all year groups from September**. You will be able to read the re-opening plan and risk assessment in full for yourselves. We shall also be sending out an abridged version for parents/carers in the second half of the summer holiday, outlining the day to day practicalities for families and students. Things will be slightly different from September. It is essential that all students understand exactly how school will function and some of the changes, which will be necessary. Therefore, we will be staggering the start of students very slightly at the start of term. We do not tend to do this at St Robert's, but this year we do feel it to be imperative that students are re-introduced to school in a way which allows them to fully understand the safety measures in place to minimise risk, and a staggered start allows us to do this most effectively.

The first week of term will look like this:

Monday 31 st August	School closed (Bank Holiday)
Tuesday 1 st September	School closed to all students (Scheduled INSET Day)
Wednesday 2 nd September	School closed to students (Scheduled INSET Day) but open to Year 7 Students only for a Transition Day.
Thursday 3 rd September	School open to Years 7, 8, 9 and 12 only.
Friday 4 th September	School open to all Year Groups.

I should like to go on to various pastoral notices, looking back on this year and looking forward to next.

Houses and Awards

Let me start by saying congratulations to St Cuthbert Durham House, our winning House for the academic year 2019-2020. The pupils led by their Head of House, Mrs Mulhatton, and her Assistant Head of House, Miss Martin, gained the most achievement points in the school up to 20th March 2020. This is an excellent achievement by the whole group, every pupil in the House contributed in some way towards their winning total and this will be recognised with the awarding of a certificate to the members of this House. I am sure the other Heads of House and their pupils will show a renewed determination to ensure that their House can take this title next year. I am sure all parents and carers will continue to ask their sons and daughters to work hard to gain as many achievement points as they can for themselves and their respective Houses, when they return in September. Parents and carers can monitor achievement and behaviour point scores by regularly checking their child's planner.



A large number of pupils, over eight hundred, from all the Houses recently had their efforts for this academic year recognised with bronze, silver, gold and platinum certificates being sent home. The certificates celebrate the achievement points gained by the students. The huge number of certificates shows how hard the majority of our students work when they are in school.

Attendance

The overall school attendance up to and including 20th March 2020 had shown an improvement on the previous year. This was achieved because parents and carers have supported their child and the school in our drive to improve overall attendance, by sending their children in to school even if they were feeling a little unwell. Thank you for your assistance in this important measure. When we return in September, parents and carers should send their children into school unless there is a medical reason for them to stay off.

Please note that if your child is absent from school you must contact the attendance team by telephone, **not text**, by 9.00am on the first day of absence and then every day they are off school following that. A note explaining absence is then also required on their return to school and must be handed to their tutor.

Punctuality to school

The school day begins at 8:45am when the first bell rings. We value punctuality as a way of ensuring that all students are ready to benefit fully from every day in school. The student office will send a text message to parents on the day to inform them that their child was late for school (this does not apply to late buses or extenuating circumstances in which parents have informed the school of an issue). If the pupil is late on a second occasion in the same week then they will be issued with a sanction. Persistent punctuality issues will lead to parental meetings with Heads of House/Leadership Team (at the discretion of the HoH). Following parental meetings, students may be issued with a further sanction, if necessary. If students fail to complete the sanctions, then punishments will be escalated. Punctuality is an important habit for our students to achieve.

Appointments out of School

Appointments for students during the school day should be avoided, unless there is no other option.

If an appointment is unavoidable, it should be made **at least 24 hours** in advance, so that proper school procedure can be followed correctly. Parents and carers should inform school by writing a note in their child's planner. Your child will then show this note to their Head of House who will then authorise a permission-slip so they can attend the appointment.

Children are not permitted to leave the premises without a pink slip. Parents and carers must always come into the main reception to pick their child up to take them to their appointment. Parents and carers should never walk down to the student entrance to pick up their child. (Details regarding how parents/carers should come into school will be included in the September opening plan.)

Parents and Carers should not contact their child by mobile phone to arrange appointments during the school day. All communication of this nature should always come through the correct channels into school.

Transport

If your child is able to walk or cycle to school, then we ask that they do this when they return in September.

If you intend to drop your child off or pick your child up by car then please be aware that there may be more parent and carers using this method, and it is likely the top car park and drop off point in school will be even busier than usual. **If there is an opportunity to drop your child close to school, but not on the premises, please do so, as it will greatly ease the flow of traffic.** They can then walk the final part of the journey.

Timetables for the scholars' bus services for the next academic year are available to view on the school website or by using the following link: <https://www.strobertofnewminster.co.uk/parents/buses/>. The school is currently working very closely with Nexus to try to ensure that the Scholars buses are available for students who need to use them, but also that they operate in line with government guidelines to keep students safe. Further information regarding bus use will be included in the September opening plan.

However, please note the following:

- Students must wear facemasks on all scholars and service buses
- Students must bring with them a small *sandwich* type bag to store their mask, while in school.
- Students will have to tender the exact fare, as it will not be possible to give change.
- The fare with a Pop Card is £1.10 return. Without a Pop Card, the fare is £1 for a single journey.

If parents and carers have any issues with the service provided by the school buses, please report these issues directly to Nexus as well as informing school, by contacting Mr Green.

Expectations, Uniform and Equipment

As usual, before the school was closed due to coronavirus many visitors commented on how well turned out our students are and how smart they look in their uniform. I am very grateful to all parents and carers for your continued support with this. Unfortunately, although the school rules and expectations are very clear on equipment, uniform, haircuts, make-up, false nails, etc., a small minority of students did not follow these rules last year, and so were given appropriate sanctions.

The school rules on uniform will be the same exactly the same in September. I expect all students to adhere to these rules. We all want to start the year in a positive manner, especially as most students have been out of school for a long period. I ask for the support of parents and carers with the issues mentioned above, and I would ask that you read the attached rules and expectations on uniform to ensure that you are fully aware of our expectations for your child in this area. Students not meeting our high expectations will be given sanctions. In particular, please note that **piercings are not permitted for school**, regardless of the time period of 'new' piercings. Please ensure that any recent piercings are removed before your child returns to school.

During the period of lockdown, the school was more lenient than it would normally be with those students who were coming into school over certain elements of uniform and appearance, in particular haircuts. This was the sensible thing to do, as we understood that there might have been difficulty in acquiring haircuts or certain items of clothing. However, from September, expectations will be exactly as they were pre-lockdown. Please see below for St Robert's expectations on equipment and uniform for all students. This information is also available on the school website.

All Students

Sensible hairstyles at the discretion of the Senior Assistant Head Teacher/Assistant Head Teacher (no fashion accessories, no tramlines, steps, Mohicans, or outlandish colour).

Hair must not be shaved to an extreme shortness. The school will be the arbiter of whether hair is too short, but as a starting point hair shaved shorter than a number 2 guard will be deemed too short.

No zero guard skin fades (any fades should be no shorter than a number 2 guard).

No hair extensions including clip in, braids or semi-permanent extensions.

No visible tattoos, semi –permanent and henna are not allowed.

No earrings or body piercings. This includes clear studs or 'spacers'.

No acrylic or artificial nails, nail varnish, gel nails, make-up or false eyelashes, painted or dyed eyebrow. Do NOT bring make-up into school, it will be confiscated.

No False tan.

Finger nails should be kept at a sensible length so you can take part in all in and out of school activities.

All students must have a school bag to carry school books and equipment (see equipment list)

No smartphone watches allowed.

Mobile phones may be brought to school, but must be switched off, and in bags throughout the school day. Students who refuse to wear the correct school uniform will be given an appropriate sanction.

Equipment

Textbooks, exercise books, student planners and folders are supplied and should be looked after with care. They are each child's responsibility and any loss or wilful damage will mean that they will have to pay for a replacement.

Your child will need:

- A bag (large enough to hold any books and equipment)
- Pen (black or blue), Pencil, Ruler, Rubber, Protractor, Compass
- Scientific Calculator
- PE Kit
- 2 Reading Books

It is even more important than usual that students remember their equipment every day, given restrictions on sharing equipment from September.

All students will be given a planner at the start of the academic year. Planners must be signed weekly by a parent or carer. Students must have their planner at all times – replacement planners will be charged to parents at a cost of £5. If a student writes graffiti on their planner, they will be expected to purchase a new one.

Uniform

The uniform items listed below are required to be worn by all students. They can be ordered online at www.theschooloutfit.co.uk. Follow the link for secondary schools, and select St Robert of Newminster. The School Outfit Company also has shops in the Washington Galleries (0191 419 2319) and Sunderland (0191 510 8186) where you can purchase uniform. The School Outfit Company is willing to take orders online for all uniform items, and is happy to exchange, if any item ordered online does not fit properly.

BOYS

- Green blazer with badge (colour of year)
Year 7: 2020 badge colour is Green
- White school shirt
- School tie
- Black school trousers – traditional NOT fashion (e.g. no canvas or jean material, skin tight trousers)
- Plain black leather belt (if required)
- Years 7-9 green jumper or tank top with school name embroidered (Uniform Shop)
- Years 10-11 black jumper or tank top with school name embroidered (Uniform Shop)
- **Plain** formal black flat leather school shoes - no trainers, trainer designs, sports brands, canvas shoes, plimsolls and no suede or pump-style footwear. No suede desert boots or shoes or Dr. Marten style boots.
- Plain black formal leather boots worn under trousers (winter only)
- Plain dark coloured socks.

GIRLS

- Green blazer with badge (colour of year) Year 7: 2020 badge colour is Green
- White school blouse with short sleeve or three-quarter sleeve (No tie)
- Black school trousers – traditional NOT fashion (e.g. no leggings, canvas or jean material, skin tight trousers or hipster-style trousers)
- Plain black leather belt (if required)
- Tartan knee length school skirt (Uniform Shop)
- Years 7-9 green jumper or tank top or cardigan with school name embroidered (Uniform Shop)
- Years 10-11 black jumper or tank top or cardigan with school name embroidered (Uniform Shop)
- Plain black or natural tights or white or black ankle socks
- **Plain** formal black flat leather school shoes – no trainers, trainer designs, sports brands, canvas shoes, plimsolls and no suede or pump-style footwear or Dr. Marten style boots
- Plain black flat leather boots worn under trousers (winter only)

As a school St. Roberts is extremely proud of our uniform and we expect all pupils to adhere to our uniform standards at all times. Those pupils who do not do so, will face appropriate sanctions in school.

Communication – Emails and the My Ed app

If you have any queries during the summer holidays please continue to use the school email address and these queries will be passed on to the appropriate member of staff. Please do not text school via the MyEd app, as this facility is not being monitored at the present time.

If you do not have the MyEd app please use the instructions below to download the app as soon as possible, as the app is used to send out notifications and messages to parents and carers. These notifications are free to send. If you do not have the app, you will receive a text message with the same information, but at a cost to the school.

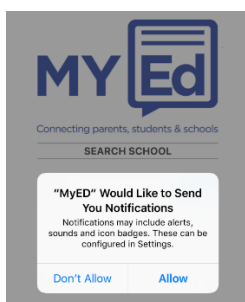
Please see instructions for how to download and set up the MYEd App below:

The MyEd app is available in both the Apple App Store and Google Play Store as a free download.

Go to either of the stores and search for MyEd. You should find an app with the following logo from a provider called Results Squared Ltd.

Once downloaded, open the MyEd app.

You may see the following screen:



By selecting Allow, it will allow the school to contact you via the app and vice versa. To achieve the full functionality of the app, please allow notifications.

You are then prompted to enter the school's post code. This is **NE38 8AF**. Select "**St Robert of Newminster Roman Catholic...**"

Enter your full name, mobile number and email address. Select "**Link Account**". You will receive a security code via SMS. Enter this into the "**Security Code**" box. Select "**Create Account**". The MyEd app is now ready to use.

Once again, thank you for your continued support and cooperation. We very much look forward to welcoming back all students in September. As stated above, you will receive further information regarding the September opening in due course. I wish you all a happy and safe summer, as we look forward to a new and successful school year.

We keep you all in our prayers.

Yours faithfully

Mr D Juric
Headteacher