



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

16th October 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

I hope you and your families are well. I wanted to write to you before half term to give you certain updates on the current situation, and to pass on a few important reminders. However, before I begin, I would like to congratulate students on their fantastic start to the school term. The current situation in and out of school is difficult for everyone. Our student body has been excellent in how sensibly and quickly they have adapted to new routines and systems, which must seem quite alien to them in many respects. In particular, I want to welcome our Year 7 and Year 12 students, whose start to life at St Robert's has been different to the norm, but who have settled in incredibly well. I commend all students most highly. Thank you also to parents and carers for their ongoing cooperation with the school in the application of the many new measures and arrangements. We do need to continue to work together in our response to the present circumstances.

Communication

Please check any updates from the school sent via text message (ideally through the MyEd app) or posted on the school website. Thank you for using telephone or email to communicate with the school to limit the number of visitors on site.

Transport/Arrival/Departure

This has worked well this half term, but there may still be some room for improvement. We have seen a slight increase in the number of students walking or cycling to school. However, if this represents a feasible and safe choice for your child, we do encourage more students to take this option. Thank you to parents for remaining in their vehicle in the top car park. Please remember that if you are able to drop your child safely near the school and to allow them to walk the final stage, this will certainly ease congestion for parents, which has been a problem at times. Please do exit safely from the car park. At morning and afternoon drop off/ pick up, we would ask you to make a left turn only on exit, both to ease congestion and to reduce the risk of accidents. Students have adapted very well to the wearing of masks on the school buses – these are compulsory. We remind you that students must tender the exact fare. Students board the buses in year groups, but please do encourage your child to remain in their section of the bus during the entire journey. Punctuality remains key in our efforts to get all students into school within their year group bubbles. This has been very positive so far.

Student Appearance

Uniform has been excellent. Please encourage your child to keep up this high standard. This applies as well to hair style, colour and length. The school is very clear with students about what is not acceptable. Therefore, please do not allow your son or daughter to put the school in the position where we have to challenge or sanction them for totally unavoidable reasons of appearance.



Canteen

The canteen is currently accessed by Years 8 and 9 at KS3 lunch, and Years 10 and 11 at KS4 lunch. Year 7 students order their food during lesson one using a menu pro forma. Their food is delivered to their classrooms before their lunch at 12.20pm. We were able to introduce some hot food options at the beginning of October for those year groups who currently access the canteen. We have also just opened the canteen to certain year groups at morning break. The canteen remains very well supervised and is cleaned between sittings. After half-term we hope to be able to swap Year 7 with another year group to allow them to access the canteen at lunchtime. The school is now cashless, so it is vital that parents and carers, who want their child to get a lunch, ensure their Parent Pay account is always in credit. If parents and carers have any issues with this, please contact your child's Head of House.

Face Coverings

All members of the school community have to wear a mask when in the building, unless exempt, whilst moving around the corridors, when lining up at any point, and when leaving the site at the end of the school day. This is closely monitored by all staff and any student found without a mask is challenged and where necessary we provide that student with a new mask. The overwhelming majority of students are bringing a mask in every day. However, we do still have some students who forget to bring a mask, in some cases repeatedly so. We ask that parents and carers continue to support the school by ensuring their child brings a clean mask to school every day.

Attendance

Thank you for ensuring the attendance of your child. All students are expected in school and normal attendance/absence procedures are in place.

Unfortunately, given the current high levels of infection in the community, some positive cases amongst the student body or their families are almost inevitable, and we have had a number of positive cases reported to us. Students will at times also have to self-isolate due to being close contacts of people who have tested positive, whether that contact is in school, home or the wider community. Thank you to those parents who have already informed us that their son or daughter has tested positive, or is self-isolating due to contact with a positive case. It is vital that you continue to do so. This includes during the school holidays, as there may still be contacts in school who need to be traced, even if school is closed to students. To inform the school that your child is having to self-isolate, please simply report it to the Attendance Team, in the same way you would for any other absence. However, to report your child has tested positive, please ring the Main School Office on 0191 7161700, or if this is not possible email school@str.bwcet.com. Please remember that it is essential that you do not come into school, but stay home and self-isolate in the following cases:

- you have any [symptoms of coronavirus](#) (a high temperature, a new, continuous cough or a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste)
- you've tested positive for coronavirus
- you live with someone who has symptoms or tested positive
- someone in your support bubble has symptoms or tested positive
- [you're told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace or the NHS COVID-19 app](#)
- you arrive in the UK from a country with a high coronavirus risk

Please also note the following:

- You should book a test as soon as possible if you have any symptoms of coronavirus.
- You do not need to get a test if you have no symptoms or if you have different symptoms.

Please follow the two links below for further details on when to self-isolate and how long to self-isolate for:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-and-treatment/when-to-self-isolate-and-what-to-do/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-and-treatment/how-long-to-self-isolate/>

In addition to the guidance above, if someone in school develops symptoms, we will contact home for them to be picked up as soon as possible, to self-isolate and to book a test. If we are made aware of a positive case in school,

we work with Public Health and follow their guidance to identify any close contacts of the person who has tested positive. We then contact home for these *close contacts* to be collected as soon as possible and to self-isolate for 14 days from their last contact with the positive case. The school cannot tell you the name of the person who has tested positive, but we will inform you of the dates involved. We confirm the content of this telephone call with a letter. *Close contacts* do not have to get a test, unless they develop symptoms themselves.

I realise that it is very frustrating to be contacted for self-isolation. The system of contact tracing allows us not to send home students unnecessarily. However, if your child is identified, it is essential for the safety of others within the school and wider community that they do self-isolate for the required time.

How to get a test and what to do after it?

If you do require a test, please follow the link below for information about when and how to get one:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/get-a-test-to-check-if-you-have-coronavirus/>

The further link below tells you what to do after your test and explains what the possible outcomes mean:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/what-your-test-result-means/>

For any further information around COVID-19, please see:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Summer Examinations

You may have seen the recent announcement by the government that most GCSE and A Level examinations will be delayed by around three weeks this summer, to allow for more teaching time. The government has announced that the end date for almost all A level and GCSE examinations will be Friday 2nd July 2021. Results days have been announced as Tuesday 24th August for A levels and Friday 27th August for GCSEs. When we have more precise information we will forward it to those students concerned.

Remote Learning

If your child is self-isolating for COVID related reasons, they are able to access their school work via Microsoft Teams. All students have access to Teams as part of our school Office 365 suite. Students will access Teams through their Office 365 email account. Instructions on how to access remote learning can be found in the Teams Learning Portal on the school website <https://www.strobertofnewminster.co.uk/>.

Teams is used by teachers to upload lessons and learning materials. Students are able to contact their teachers directly, via Teams, and ask any questions that they may have. If students do have a question please encourage them to give as much detail as possible to the teacher. If a student is self-isolating due to Covid related issues they should follow their normal timetable. The vast majority of student work should be completed in exercise books unless the teacher requests it to be submitted via Teams. This way, students will have a consistent and continuous level of work in their exercise books when they return to school. I would like to reassure you that the work that teachers will be uploading will replicate the work students would be doing normally in class. Students will be able to find the work in the "Files" and "Class Materials" section of their subject Team. There will also be instructions on each Team landing page directing the students to the work they should be completing.

Students will receive notifications via their school email account alerting them to any live lessons, they should attend remotely. Should there be live lessons scheduled for students, it is vital that they attend and participate fully. It is imperative that students check their email and Team channel regularly. Students will be expected to complete all work set, meet deadlines and submit any work that requires feedback to their teachers. So far, students have been excellent at accessing Teams and adapting to this new way of working. However, we do stress the necessity of them accessing and completing work during any isolation period, unless of course they themselves are ill.

Thank you for your ongoing support and cooperation during a difficult period. As a school, we keep you all in our prayers.

Yours faithfully

Mr D Juric
Head Teacher