



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

1st April 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

We hope you and your families are well. During these difficult times, there are a number of worries and concerns for us all. However, the most important thing is always to stay safe and healthy. Please continue to follow Government and Health guidelines. We hold the whole school community in our prayers.

I shall endeavour to update you on a number of matters. As I have stated previously, please do bear with us on those issues which are not yet resolved, or which remain slightly unclear. Your patience is very much appreciated, and we will continue to update you, once we are in a position to do so.

Student Home Study

Students have been getting on with work on the school website. We have been made aware of the odd glitch here and there, but in the main, I think we have managed to resolve them. However, if the system is regularly not working for you, please do contact the school school@strobertofnewminster.co.uk and we will try to work with you on a solution. Some parents and carers contacted us to say that they had no internet access and therefore required paper copies of the work. If this applies to you, also please let us know. Certain students have been sticking roughly to their school timetable and organising their work into lesson-sized chunks. Others have been doing a morning of a subject, then an afternoon of another. Whatever works best for you, and your own situation, is fine. As parents and carers, you know best what will work for your child. Obviously, we do want students to keep up with their studies, but equally we do not want the completion of work to be a source of undue stress to our young people. We are aware that everyone's situation will be different. Some will be looking after younger siblings. Some will have limited computer access. At times students may find certain topics difficult without the help of a teacher on hand. If students do their best, then that is more than enough. Certainly, no students should be spending more time working than they would be doing, were they in school. Please do not feel guilty about building in time for fresh air, exercise, food, reading, relaxation, time with family, and so on. I am sure that in some cases your sons and daughters may need some encouragement to do more. In other cases, they may actually need encouragement to do less.

There will be no work set for the Easter holidays, but from the start of what would be next term (20th April) teachers will be uploading work on a weekly basis, designed to represent a week's worth of study in that subject area. They will also be posting some feedback sheets at various points so that students can see how they have done with certain tasks. For some of the older students, in time, we will look at how they can submit specific pieces of work to staff, but we will give more information on that next term.



School Opening

The school remains open to children of key workers and vulnerable students, whose parents or carers have no alternative safe childcare. The students involved have been excellent. We are happy to continue to provide this service, but we do remind you of the government guidance that if you have safe alternative childcare, you should not send your son or daughter to school, and they should stay at home. Furthermore, children must not be sent into school during a period of household self-isolation. We will also be providing supervision over Easter for those children whose key worker parents and carers have emailed us. These parents/ carers will be contacted directly, later this week, about arrangements. We must be informed of any Easter requirements in advance. If no pupil is scheduled to be in on a particular day, the school will be shut and children would risk arriving at a closed school, if they turned up unannounced.

Free School Meals

Parents/ carers who have sent in their details should now be in receipt of e-vouchers to cover the cost of these meals. If you are eligible and have not yet subscribed to the service please send yours and your child(ren)'s details to finance@trinitycatholicmat.com. If there are any issues, please let us know.

Year 11 and Year 13

We understand completely the many questions and uncertainties students and parents will have in relation to the cancellation of this summer's exams. At present, we have already passed on all the information we have about the process for the awarding of grades this summer. We are expecting a further announcement from the government this week. Once we have more information, we will update you. However, please understand that this may not be immediately following the government announcement, as we would want to process the information properly and work out what it means in practice, before discussing it with parents and students.

In the meantime, keep all work safe, and please note that we cannot discuss individual student cases at this point. The students involved have our absolute sympathy. However, for the moment, we are not able to give you any more detail. As students are now not sitting exams this summer, there is no specific preparation they should be doing for them at this point. However, after Easter, we will be looking to provide some guidance for work in subject areas that students may be studying in the Sixth Form next year. We will also be updating parents and students on the Sixth Form enrolment process.

A few parents have enquired about Leavers' Hoodies and the Year 11 Year Book. Hoodies (grey) and Year Books are ready to order via Parentpay and must be ordered before April 24th 2020. The Year Book is £10 and the Hoodie £20. Most students who want a hoodie have given their size requests already. However, if your child has not done so, please email the school directly, giving the student name and size (XS/S/M/L/XL). (To give an indication of size, on average, the girls preferred a SMALL, whilst the boys preferred a MEDIUM.) Parentpay payments can be made in the following locations:

KG-Yr 11 Leavers Hoodie

KG Yr 11 Year Book

If for any reason you do not have access to Parentpay, please send a cheque to school, made payable to Trinity Catholic MAT indicating the child's name and tutor group. Once all orders have been processed, we will inform you of delivery/collection dates.



School Trips and Visits

We are working hard to address the issue of the many trips and visits, which are scheduled for this school year or early next school year. All tour companies are engaging with us, but as you can imagine, they are proceeding with immense caution, as they have seen their businesses hit catastrophically. We will contact parents and carers of students on specific foreign trips over the course of the next few weeks, with updates on progress (refund information, possible rescheduling, etc.). In relation to UK based visits, I can confirm the following:

- Year 11 Record of Achievement Day is sadly cancelled, but we will try to mark students' achievements in some other way, when it is possible to do so.
- Year 11 Prom is also sadly cancelled. Full refunds will be processed over the next few weeks.
- Year 7 Visit to Holy Island – we are holding the booking for now, as we have until June to cancel with a full refund. The final decision will be made in line with Government and Health advice at the time.
- The Diocesan Summer Festival has been cancelled.
- The PE Trip to Derwent Hill will now take place next school year. Payments will be transferred to cover the cost of this new trip.
- DofE expeditions are highly unlikely to take place this school year and will be rearranged for next school year. Payments will be transferred to cover the cost of these new trips. Students should continue with the other elements of their award, if they can do so safely.

Please continue to monitor text messages and follow the school website. Along with all staff at the school, I keep all our students and their families in my thoughts, and we pray for better days soon.

Yours sincerely

Mr D Juric
Head Teacher

