



# 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

31<sup>st</sup> December 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

I hope you are all well, and have had as good a Christmas as possible, given the current restrictions in place. As you will no doubt be aware, the government made further announcements yesterday regarding the start of term, which will require changes to the arrangements communicated to you prior to Christmas. This letter will outline, in as much detail as we are currently able to give, what the start of term will look like.

Based on the government guidance issued so far:

- **Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January is an INSET Day** and school will be closed to all students. Unlike other INSET Days, students should access that day's lessons remotely via their Teams account. Work is already uploaded for them to access.
- **Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> to Friday 8<sup>th</sup> January** – school is only open to children of critical workers and children who fit the vulnerable criteria. (Please see below for further details.) **Any students, who have an external exam scheduled for this week, should come in for the start of the school day on the day of the exam. They will remain in school until the end of the school day.**
- Students from all year groups should access their school work remotely during this week. (Further details below.)
- **W/c Monday 11<sup>th</sup> January** - all Year 11 and Year 13 students will be in school every day this week as normal. **Any students, regardless of their year group, who have an external exam scheduled for this week, should come in for the start of the school day on the day of the exam. They will remain in school until the end of the school day.** The school will also be open to Vulnerable and Critical Worker children every day this week.
- All other students in Years 7 to 10, and Year 12, will be at home during this week, and will access their work remotely. (Further information below.)
- As previously stated, school start and finish times, uniform, routines, etc. will all be exactly the same as normal for those students in school. School buses will be running. E-vouchers will be emailed out w/c 4 January for those students eligible for Free School Meals working from home during Week 1 and/or 2 of term.



## Testing of Students

We are still awaiting full guidance from the government, addressing exactly how the testing of students will be rolled out. However, we now expect to start w/c 11 January with Year 11 and Year 13 students. We then expect to expand the testing to other year groups w/c 18 January. We shall provide further information, including details regarding consent, during the first week of term.

## Notes:

The definition of vulnerable children is:

- are assessed as being in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, including children and young people who have a child in need plan, a child protection plan or who are a looked-after child
- have an education, health and care (EHC) plan
- have been identified as otherwise vulnerable by educational providers or local authorities (including children's social care services), and who could therefore benefit from continued full-time attendance, this might include:
  - children and young people on the edge of receiving support from children's social care services or in the process of being referred to children's services
  - adopted children or children on a special guardianship order
  - those at risk of becoming NEET ('not in employment, education or training')
  - those living in temporary accommodation
  - those who are young carers
  - those who may have difficulty engaging with remote education at home (for example, due to a lack of devices or quiet space to study)
  - care leavers
  - other children and young people at the provider and local authority's discretion including pupils who need to attend to receive support or manage risks to their mental health

Please note from the list above that this includes students who may not be able to access remote work/lessons from home (for whatever reason).

If your child falls into one of these categories, and you intend to send them in every day, **please email [school@str.bwcet.com](mailto:school@str.bwcet.com) by Sunday 3 January** to inform us. We have already received notification from some parents/carers. If you have not yet done so, please do remember to let us know by the deadline. Please put **Vulnerable Provision** in the title box of your email. Please note that if children in this category are coming into school, they must come in every day (Tuesday-Friday Week 1, Monday-Friday Week 2). We cannot accept requests for students to be in some days and not others. If you do not inform us that you are sending your child in, then we will not be expecting them, and therefore you will not be contacted if they do not arrive in the morning.

The Critical Worker groups can be found by following this link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision>

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### Remote Working

On the INSET Day, 4<sup>th</sup> January, all students will access work remotely via Teams, as is already the case.

From Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January, teachers will stream lessons live, enabling students to join remotely from home. Students must follow their normal timetable each day and join the live Teams lessons where scheduled. The duration of each lesson will be 50 minutes. This will allow for a short screen break and time for students to access their next lesson. There may be occasions where teachers are unable to stream live lessons. If this is the case, students will be informed on the Team channel and given further instructions.

Teachers will schedule the lessons, and the link to join the session will appear on the Teams channel. Students will see this when they access their subject Teams. It is important students check messages in their subject Teams throughout the self-isolation period. Students must complete their work in their exercise books. Students must have their equipment ready for each lesson. If a student does not have their exercise book please complete the work on paper. Please help students get organised for the week.

It is vital students attend online and normal attendance procedures will be followed if students do not attend the live lessons. Students must be punctual to the online lesson. Students must follow the MS Teams Code of Conduct. Sanctions will be issued on return to school should any student misbehave during a live lesson. The Code of Conduct is available in the "Teams Learning Portal" [here](#).

If you have multiple siblings who attend the school and do not have enough devices to go round, one child should access the online lesson. The other child(ren) can either access the uploaded work via Teams, as normal, at a later time, or can come into school, under the *Vulnerable Provision* (see instructions above).

All students have access to Teams, as it is part of our school Office 365 suite. Students must access Teams through their new Office 365 email account. Teams can be accessed from a tablet, mobile phone or PC. If there are any issues with usernames/passwords please do let us know. A student guide on how to join MS Teams live lessons can be found in the *Teams Learning Portal* [here](#). If you have limited or no internet access, or students do not have a suitable device to access their Teams lesson, or you have any technical issues, please do let us know by emailing [school@str.bwcet.com](mailto:school@str.bwcet.com)

### Self-isolation

Regardless of all the information above, the usual rules in relation to positive tests and self-isolation of close contacts will still apply as normal. The school should continue to be informed in the usual way of any such cases.

Thank you for your attention. I realise that these changes may prove less than ideal for some families. However, as a school we are trying to work as flexibly as we can in response to these recent announcements, and are also trying to keep you informed as best we can.

I take this opportunity to wish you all the very best for 2021.

Yours faithfully

Mr D Juric  
Head Teacher

