

# 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

16 December 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

I hope you and your families are well. As we approach the end of term, I wanted to write to you with messages of thanks and good wishes, as well as one or two reminders and pieces of information.

I begin by congratulating our students on how well they have conducted themselves and adapted to new routines. Overwhelmingly, their work and behaviour has been first rate. I cannot commend them highly enough. We know that this positive attitude is due in great part to the encouragement they receive from parents and carers. I would like to thank you all, on behalf of the school, for your ongoing cooperation and support.

Given the levels of infection present within the community during these past few months, sadly certain students' attendance has been disrupted to a degree by positive cases and self-isolation. Obviously, the ideal situation is for students to be in school all of the time. However, working with Public Health we have minimised the number of students affected. We have also worked hard to provide remote learning for all students affected by such absence. Please continue to encourage and ensure that your child completes any online work, should they be self-isolating. This is so important.

I appreciate that absences may have been most concerning for those students in Years 11 and 13, who have examinations this summer. Please rest assured that staff have been prioritising these year groups. Both year groups have shown a positive attitude and have been making very pleasing progress. They should make sure they are well prepared for their mock examinations after Christmas, as these will provide an excellent opportunity to assess exactly where they are in their learning. You will be aware that nationally the majority of public examinations this summer have been put back slightly to allow for extra time in school. We will also be receiving further guidance from exam boards regarding the format and possible content of this summer's examinations, after Christmas. We shall of course pass this information on, and tailor our preparation of students accordingly. Students have recommenced their GCSE and Post 16 study really well so far. If they continue to work with the same positive attitude, complete the tasks required of them, and build in ongoing review and revision in good time, they can be confident of achieving the grades they deserve this summer.

## Reporting of Positive Cases

Thank you to those parents who informed us over the course of the term that their son or daughter had tested positive, or was self-isolating due to contact with a positive case. It is vital that you continue to do so next term. The DfE, in conjunction with Public Health England, has published specific guidance regarding positive tests over Christmas. This guidance is explained below:

*If a pupil tests positive, having developed symptoms more than 48 hours since being in school, the school should not be contacted. Parents and carers should follow contact tracing instructions provided from NHS Test and Trace.*



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In the case of St Robert's, this means that if a student attends school on the final day of term, and then goes on to test positive, they should only email the school if they developed symptoms or tested positive on one of Friday 18<sup>th</sup>, Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> or Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> December, as we may need to contact trace other students. Please email [school@str.bwcet.com](mailto:school@str.bwcet.com). If they go on to test positive and had developed symptoms from Monday 21<sup>st</sup> onwards, then they should not inform school, and contact tracing will be provided by NHS Test and Trace. (In the case of Sixth Form students, positive cases would only contact school if symptoms started up to and including Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> December.)

The DfE has also stated that after 24<sup>th</sup> December, no parents or carers should contact schools regarding positive cases, regardless of when symptoms started. From 25<sup>th</sup> December onwards, contact tracing over the holidays will be conducted by NHS Test and Trace, regardless of when symptoms started. Schools will take up the responsibility again from the start of the new term.

If your child is simply self-isolating, we do not need to know until the start of term.

You will have seen in the media over the last 24 hours news of proposed rapid testing in schools from January. Once we have further details on how this will function, we will share it with parents and carers.

### Well-being

Where we have been aware of students or families in need of additional support of some kind during this term, we have tried to work with them to provide or source this extra help. If you are struggling next term, again please do contact us. You should contact the school via your child's Head of House or Head of Year, or Mr McHale/Mrs Bowen.

If you or your child is struggling with your own well-being over the Christmas period, I would like to signpost a few useful sites which can provide a whole range of well-being and mental health support:

[www.kooth.com](http://www.kooth.com) - a free, confidential, online mental health service for children and young people.

<https://www.camhs-resources.co.uk/> - a site full of helpful resources to help support mental health and well-being.

[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk) - Tel: 0800 1111 (calls are free from landlines and mobiles in the UK).

[www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org) - Tel: 116 123 (free confidential helpline) email: [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)

[www.sunderlandmind.co.uk](http://www.sunderlandmind.co.uk) - Tel: 0191 5657218 Text: 07984595542 email: [admin@sunderlandmind.co.uk](mailto:admin@sunderlandmind.co.uk)

[www.washingtonmind.org.uk](http://www.washingtonmind.org.uk) - Tel: 0191 4178043 Text: 07507330995 email: [info@washingtonmind.org.uk](mailto:info@washingtonmind.org.uk)

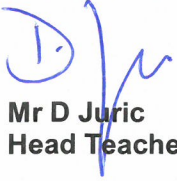
### Student Appearance

Uniform has been excellent this term. Please encourage your child to keep up this high standard. In particular at holiday time, we urge you please to ensure that your child does not have a haircut or piercing which will result in their appearance being deemed inappropriate upon their return in January. Please do not allow your child to put the school in the position where we have to challenge or sanction them for totally avoidable reasons.

To conclude, I return to the end of term and Christmas. Well done to all students for their hard work this term. I am sure you will also join with me in thanking all staff in school for their continued efforts in working to support our young people, especially over the previous few months. I re-iterate my thanks too to parents and carers, for your ongoing support of the school. As a local and global community we have been living through a very challenging time. Recent breakthroughs hopefully herald the dawning of better times in 2021. As a school, we pray this Christmas for all those involved in the forthcoming vaccination programme, and the ongoing care of those suffering from COVID. Unfortunately, this Christmas, we were unable to invite you into school, as we would normally do, to join us in prayer and celebration. However, students have been taking part in preparation for Christmas during Advent, in their tutor groups. I wish all students a very Happy Christmas and a chance to rest and spend time with family. It remains for me to wish you all a very happy and peaceful Christmas and to send you my very best wishes for 2021.

Thank you once again, and as a school we keep you all in our prayers.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'D. Juric', written over the printed name.

**Mr D Juric**  
**Head Teacher**

