



2nd September, 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

### **Coronavirus update 22**

Happy New (academic) Year! I trust you have enjoyed a restful summer break, whether you've been away or stayed at home. Today is officially a Training Day, with some staff coming into school and others working at home – it's been good to see colleagues again, and it'll be great to meet some students tomorrow – it's been a long time!

In my last Coronavirus update (issued on 17th July and still available on our website), I indicated that the next edition would come out this Friday. We're publishing this edition a little early in order partly to send you the attached letter from the City Council, partly to offer some advice and guidance from the NSPCC (also attached), and partly to answer some of the questions that you may have about our restarting.

### **What are the arrangements for this week and next?**

We haven't made any changes to the arrangements we circulated on 10th July in Coronavirus Update 20 – a copy of which is reproduced at the end of this letter. In short:

- Year 7s are in school all day on Thursday 3rd and Friday 4th September (to make up for the induction they didn't have last term);
- Years 8, 9, 10 and 11 are in for half-a-day only over the next two days (the letter below spells out exactly when);
- Year 12 are in school all day Friday; and
- Year 13 aren't in school this week.

Everyone will start back in school full-time on Monday, with staggered starting times – again as set out in the letter below. Each day, students will have all their lesson in one 'zone' in the building (eg the Maths/RS corridors); they must not leave their 'zone' unless explicitly told to by a member of staff.

### **Entering the exiting the site**

- Boys in Years 7 to 11 must use the Church Lane entrance to our site, but not enter the small yard as they normally would do; instead, they must walk round the back of the Technology Block and gather on the large yard. They will then be sent to their zone that day for their lessons.
- Sixth-Form students should also use the Church Lane entrance and go straight into the Sixth Form canteen on their arrival.
- Because of these arrangements, it is important that students arrive on time for their lessons. Arriving late means missing learning; arriving too early could mean that the year-group bubbles are not kept separate.
- Lessons will start promptly at the designated time – so an 8:35am start for Year 11, for example, means that students will need to be in the large yard by 8:30am to allow time to get to their zone for the day.

## Personal health and hygiene

- Do not send your child to school if they show any of the symptoms of Covid-19 (there are three: a high temperature; a new, continuous cough; or a change to, or loss of, taste or smell). Instead use <https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19/> for further advice.
- Please encourage your son/daughter to wash their hands regularly (providing them with some hand sanitiser would be great!) and to catch coughs and sneezes in a tissue which should then be binned (again, providing them with some tissues would be great too). We cannot stress these two measures enough!

## Uniform changes

- Blazers are optional until further notice.
- On days when the boys have PE, they should come to school in their PE kit. When weather conditions dictate, boys can travel to school wearing training/active leisurewear appropriate for PE (*ie* track-suit/jogging bottoms or tops) and a coat, with their school PE kit underneath. There will be no changing facilities. Boys will need to bring a packed lunch as on that day only, we will be unable to provide hot meals in the canteen (see below).

## Face masks

Students do not have to wear masks in school, although they may do so if they so wish (and we are saying the same for members of staff). Please note, however, that if our local area goes into a local lockdown, we may have to change our approach.

Students who travel by public transport, however, are reminded that face masks must be worn when using buses and trains. (On the subject of trains, I attach a letter from Merseyrail that will be of interest to those who use their services to travel to or from school).

## Food and drink

- Boys may use the canteen every day except for the day when they have PE (their ‘short’ day). Sixth Form students will have access to the Sixth Form canteen during their lunch breaks.
- Hot meals will be available as usual, and payment will be ‘by finger’ – using the +Pay system. We’ll be sanitising the finger-reader after every usage! However we won’t be able to sanitise the finger-readers on the paying-in machines, so these will not be operational until further notice. We’d be very grateful if parents could therefore pay any money into their family’s account online through +Pay – do contact us if you would like help setting this up.
- Students are welcome to bring a drink of water (or flavoured water) but **it must be in a reusable bottle** – single-use plastic bottles must not be used from here on in. Water bottles may only be refilled at lunch-time from the stations by the canteen (otherwise students would have to leave their ‘zone’).

## Behaviour

We are always grateful to the vast majority of St Margaret’s students who behave responsibly and maturely both on site and whilst travelling to and from school. High standards of behaviour are even more important now because of the need to ‘catch up’ with the learning-time we’ve lost. Although we won’t be using our Internal Exclusion Unit, students who disrupt the learning of others will still be removed from their class and/or given detentions, as appropriate.

Because of the pandemic, we will be adopting a particularly tough attitude towards any student who coughs or sneezes on someone else (or who pretends to) – and we’d be grateful if you could reinforce this with your son or daughter.

## **Attendance**

Attendance at school is still compulsory; our policies and procedures with regard to attendance are not changing. Please continue to let us know if your child is going to be absent from school, as the fact that registers are being taken at different times of the day will complicate our 'First Day Response' procedures.

## **Building changes**

We've made a number of changes to the building, including...

- Every classroom has hand sanitiser and tissues.
- There are wall-mounted hand sanitisers around the school too.
- Where possible (*ie* almost everywhere), all chairs and desks face forwards.
- Every office and meeting-room has a designated limit to prevent overcrowding.

We're confident that we've made our site as safe as possible for the return of students.

Finally: we are very much looking forward to welcoming your son or daughter back to school tomorrow. Some of our students have coped admirably over the last 5½ months, and some have found it more of a challenge – but however your child has found it, we can't wait to put a metaphorical arm round their shoulder, welcome them in, and re-engage them with one of the most precious things any human being can offer – the opportunity to learn, and thus to grow, academically, socially and spiritually.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Brierley', enclosed in a thin black rectangular border.

Stephen Brierley  
Principal.



10th July, 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

### Coronavirus update 20

Welcome to another weekly update from St Margaret's. I hope that you and your family are in good health and spirits as we approach the end of term.

This last week has seen a great deal of activity as many of my colleagues and I have grappled with the Government's guidance for re-opening schools in September. We've had to work at speed, so haven't been able to consult with others as widely or for as long as we normally would – please accept my apologies for that! And the plans we've laid so far **are not finalised yet** – they haven't been 'signed off' by our Health and Safety consultant, for example, nor by our Governors – so there may still be changes. However, I appreciate that many St Margaret's families will want to know what's likely to happen, so most of this letter is devoted to that topic.

As ever, the top priority in our thinking has been the safety of our school community – primarily students and their families, and our staff. Because of that, we are proposing to make some major changes to the way school works. **These plans are only temporary**: we anticipate that we will go back to something approximating our pre-Covid way of working at some point in the future.

#### Staggered day

The Government's guidance states that the use of public transport "*by pupils, particularly in peak times, should be kept to an absolute minimum*". This has been a key consideration for us, because most of our pupils use public transport to get to school. We are therefore proposing to operate the following school day times:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Year 7	Start: 9:05am End: 3:20pm	Start: 9:05am End: 3:20pm	Start: 9:05am End: 3:20pm	Start: 10:30am End: 2:00pm	Start: 9:05am End: 3:20pm
Year 8	Start: 10:10am End: 4:25pm	Start: 10:30am End: 2:00pm	Start: 10:10am End: 4:25pm	Start: 10:10am End: 4:25pm	Start: 10:10am End: 4:25pm
Year 9	Start: 10:30am End: 2:00pm	Start: 10:10am End: 4:25pm	Start: 9:40am End: 3:55pm	Start: 9:05am End: 3:20pm	Start: 8:35am End: 2:50pm
Year 10	Start: 9:40am End: 3:55pm	Start: 9:40am End: 3:55pm	Start: 10:30am End: 2:00pm	Start: 9:40am End: 3:55pm	Start: 9:40am End: 3:55pm
Year 11	Start: 8:35am End: 2:50pm	Start: 8:35am End: 2:50pm	Start: 8:35am End: 2:50pm	Start: 8:35am End: 2:50pm	Start: 10:30am End: 2:00pm
Year 12	Start: 9:30am End: 3:00pm	Start: 9:30am End: 3:00pm	Start: 9:30am End: 3:00pm	Start: 9:30am End: 3:00pm	Start: 9:30am End: 3:00pm
Year 13	Start: 9:55am End: 3:35pm	Start: 9:55am End: 3:35pm	Start: 9:55am End: 3:35pm	Start: 9:55am End: 3:35pm	Start: 9:55am End: 3:35pm

Partly because we have missed so much school time this year, under these plans we will be slightly increasing the amount of teaching time (by 25 minutes a week). Boys in Years 7 to 11 will have

six 55-minute lessons on four days of the week, and two 90-minute lessons on the shorter day of the week (when they start at 10:30am and finish at 2:00pm). **One of their lessons on this shorter day will be PE**, and in order to avoid the risks associated with changing rooms, **boys should travel to and from school in their school PE kit**. When weather conditions dictate, boys can travel to school wearing training/active leisurewear appropriate for PE (*ie* track-suit/jogging bottoms or tops) and a coat, with their school PE kit underneath. There will be no changing facilities. Boys will need to bring a packed lunch on these days as we will be unable to provide hot meals in the canteen.

On the subject of uniform, in order to save St Margaret’s families money during what will undoubtedly be a financially-challenging time, we are also proposing to **make blazers optional** until we return to pre-Covid arrangements.

The Sixth Form timetable will be based on which ‘blocks’ the students are studying in. A Year 13 student taking Maths, Physics and Chemistry, for example, will only attend school on Wednesday (for all their Maths lessons), on Monday (for all their Physics lessons) and on Friday (for all their Chemistry lessons). This will further reduce the demands on public transport. On one of those three days, they will stay for an extra 20-25 minutes for pastoral support.

A table showing how we propose to revise the timings of the day is appended to this letter.

When they arrive in school, students will spend their day in one ‘zone’ within school and will not be permitted to go to other parts of the school (which means that we will **not** be using lockers next year). They will have a 15-minute break (either in the morning or in the afternoon), and a 30-minute lunch-break; during both breaks they may access the canteen and the large yard.

Start of next term

As you can imagine, we will need some time with the students to explain this (and other changes for everyone’s safety) – school will be very different for all of us in September! We’ve therefore devised the following schedule for induction in September:

	Morning	Afternoon
Thursday 3rd September	Year 7 (9am to 3pm)	
	Year 9 (8:45am to 11:45am)	Year 10 (12:30pm to 3:30pm)
Friday 4th September	Year 7 (9am to 3pm)	
	Year 12 (9am to 3pm)	
	Year 11 (8:45am to 11:45am)	Year 8 (12:30pm to 3:30pm)

Students should report to school in their school uniform (blazers optional) at the stated times. Lessons will start on Monday 7th September (in line with the staggered day outlined above). Year 13 will also start back on Monday 7th September: Mr Lawton will be in touch about arrangements.

End-of-term reports

In line with Government guidance, we will be publishing brief end-of-term reports later this month (during the week beginning Monday 20th July). These reports will simply confirm the extent to which students have engaged with their online learning. We will be happy to respond to any questions that arise from the reports during the holidays if we are able, or in September if not.

### Onsite childcare

Next week is the last week of onsite childcare, which has now been running continuously for 17 weeks – 14 school weeks and 3 holiday weeks. A special mention to one student, who has been with us almost every day (including the holidays), and in doing so has become the first student in St Margaret's history to ratchet up over 100% attendance for the school year!

In common with other schools across the city, we will not be opening our doors for ongoing childcare throughout the holidays.

I am sure you would want to join me in thanking the many various teachers and support staff colleagues who have facilitated our provision over the time we've been open. Its burgeoning popularity is, I trust, evidence of its success.

### Free School Meal vouchers

The order for summer holiday vouchers has now been submitted, and I gather the first few have arrived by e-mail. If you encounter any problems, please e-mail [scbrierley@stmargaretsacademy](mailto:scbrierley@stmargaretsacademy) and I will endeavour to respond – although I may not be able to respond as quickly as I normally try to.

### Maths Competition

Thank you to those who have entered the competition. I'll announce the results next week as this week has been quite busy...!

I'll write a final Coronavirus Update next Friday. In the meantime, do enjoy a restful weekend.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Brierley', enclosed in a thin black rectangular border.

Stephen Brierley  
Principal.

