

SBR/GEN/AM042:

3rd April, 2020



St Margaret's Church of England Academy

"Achievement by faith and work"

Principal: Mr S Brierley MA NPQH

Dear Parent/Carer

Coronavirus update 8

I'm writing to update you about life at St Margaret's during these extraordinary times.

On-site childcare

We continue to provide child-care to a small number of children on-site at St Margaret's. Thanks to the dedication of our support staff, and a number of teacher volunteers, we will be able to continue offering 8:45am to 3:15pm provision during the Easter holidays (although not on Good Friday or Easter Monday). If you qualify for childcare and would like to access this during the next two weeks, please e-mail me at scbrierley@stmargaretsacademy.com for further details, and copy your e-mail to apenketh@stmargaretsacademy.com – thank you!

On-line learning

Many of our students are regularly engaging with their online learning, and we're deeply grateful for the support of our parents and carers in enabling this to happen. We're also aware of a number of boys who, through no fault of their own, are unable to engage as they might like – for example due to illness, or technological issues (with many parents working from home too, time on a family laptop can be at a premium). Please be assured that we are very sympathetic if anyone is facing these sorts of issues – just let us know at itsupport@stmargaretsacademy.com so that we can take it into account when we're monitoring things.

We will not be setting any work for the next two weeks, as I know that students and staff alike need a break! On-line learning will resume instead on Monday 20th April.

Safeguarding

Dr Silverstone, our Director of Pastoral Care, writes:

"The school's safeguarding and pastoral team is aware that many of our young people and families are facing difficulties at this time. Please remember that we may be able to offer you support; you can contact us at safeguarding@stmargaretsacademy.com.

"Some of our students will be experiencing anxiety or having difficulties maintaining a sense of wellbeing, and they may need additional support with coping strategies. Useful guidance can be found in the information attached to this newsletter, which contains many ideas suitable for adults as well as children.

"Finally, we are aware that most of our students will be seeing their 'screen-time' increase as they are conducting their learning away from school and spending more time indoors. Please do keep on reminding them to switch off the tech and take regular breaks. We've heard reports of students



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students growing vegetables, learning to cook, doing gardening and caring for their pets - all great ways to relax while developing important life skills.”

Online safety

Mrs Roberts writes:

Children and online safety away from school

At this particular time, facing a very unique “Easter Holiday” break from learning, we would like to emphasise the importance of staying safe online and signpost the website parentinfo.org for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online.

Other useful organisations that can help support you as parents and carers to keep children safe online include:

- [Internet matters](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online.
- [London Grid for Learning](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online.
- [Net-aware](#) - for support for parents and careers from the NSPCC.
- [Thinkuknow](#) - for advice from the National Crime Agency to stay safe online.
- [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) - advice for parents and carers.

Further links are located on our website:



[StaySafe Online](#)



[Safeguarding & Wellbeing](#)



[Worship](#)

GCSEs and ‘A’-levels

As I have been drafting this update, the qualifications watchdog Ofqual has published advice about how GCSE and ‘A’-level grades will be awarded this year. (Separate arrangements will be made for other qualifications, such as BTECs; these have yet to be published).

An initial reading of the documentation suggests:

- Teachers will be asked for estimated grades, and will also be asked to rank students within each grade. **We will not be asking pupils to complete any extra work to help us make these estimates.** We have also been told that the information we supply to the Exam Board is confidential until Results Day. It’s important to stress that whilst, for example, performance in Mock exams will influence our estimates, other factors are also important: for example, many students, especially those with a good track record of working hard, improve by a grade or two between the Mocks and the actual exams.
- The Exam Board will look at our overall pattern of results and check it is consistent with what they might have expected (given, for example, our pattern of results in the past). They will moderate the estimates we have provided them to ensure fairness between schools.

- Results Days may be slightly earlier than usual this year.
- If students aren't happy with their results, they can appeal. Additionally, Ofqual is looking to hold a resit opportunity in the Autumn so students can retake a qualification quickly if they wish to.
- Ofqual has produced a letter for students about what is happening, which is appended to this letter.

A number of Year 11 families have contacted us to ask how this will affect Sixth Form enrolment. In the past we have operated a fairly strict system of entry requirements, with only limited exceptions made for pupils who have not 'made the grade'. Given the circumstances, it would be only reasonable to show a little bit more latitude this year. We will be in touch with further advice for those who have applied to our Sixth Form next term.


Worship

In all the busyness of 'repurposing' our school, it's been too easy to forget that as Christians, our lives have already been 'repurposed' – instead of putting ourselves first, we should look to serve God, and the needs of others around us. The ultimate example of a repurposed life is, of course, Christ, our 'servant king' – whose death and resurrection we celebrate over the next week. Do take time to remember that story with your son or daughter over the next few days; with this newsletter we've attached a file from the Diocese that may help you to do so.

Finally...

I wish you and your family the best of health, and no small measure of peace, over the coming weeks and months. Do keep in touch with us, especially if there's anything we can do to help; at difficult times such as these, that's exactly what we're here for.

Yours faithfully



Stephen Brierley
Principal



CALM.
FOCUSSED.
SAFE.



ST HILDA'S
CE HIGH SCHOOL



GCSE, AS and A level students in England

3 April 2020

A message for all GCSE, AS and A level students this summer

I understand how unsettling the past weeks have been for you, since the [announcement that exams have been cancelled this summer, and that you are urgently waiting for news](#). I wanted to let you know what we are doing to provide you with grades. Our over-riding aim in this is to be fair to students this summer and to make sure you are not disadvantaged in your progress to sixth form, college, university, apprenticeships, training or work because of these unprecedented conditions.

How will grades be calculated?

Your school or college will be asked to send exam boards two pieces of information for each of your subjects, based on what they know about your work and achievements:

- the grade they believe you were most likely to get if teaching, learning and exams had happened as planned
- within each subject, the order of students at your school or college, by performance, for each grade. This information will be used to standardise judgements – allowing fine tuning of the standard applied across schools and colleges

Your school or college will consider a range of things like your classwork and homework; your results in assignments and any mock exams; any non-exam assessment or coursework you might have done; and your general progress during your course.

This information will allow us, with exam boards, to standardise grades across schools and colleges, to make sure that, as far as possible, results are fair and that students are not advantaged or disadvantaged because their schools or colleges are more generous or harsh than others when

making those judgements. That means the final grade you get could be different from the one your school or college sends to the exam board.

Do I need to complete any new work for my school/college to submit a grade?

Your school or college is not required to set additional mock exams or homework for your centre assessment grade, and you won't be disadvantaged if you were not set, or were unable to complete, any work given out after schools were closed.

Can I see the grades my school/college submits for me?

No, this information will be confidential. Please don't ask your teachers, or anyone else at your school or college, to tell you the grades they will be sending to the exam boards or where they have placed you in the order of students; they will not be allowed to share this with you.

I am a private candidate – what does this mean for me?

If you are a private candidate (for example, home-schooled, following distance-learning programmes or studying independently) the centre you are entering with should include you where the head teacher or principal is confident that they and their staff have seen sufficient evidence of your achievement to make an objective judgement. We are urgently exploring whether there are alternative options for those students who do not have an existing relationship with a centre and who need results this summer to progress. Unfortunately this is unlikely to be possible for all private candidates, some of whom may instead need to take exams in the autumn to get their grades.

We appreciate that this is a matter of real concern to private candidates and will provide an update as soon as possible. We have asked organisations that represent universities and FE colleges to consider the steps that providers could take when making admissions decisions this summer for any private candidates who do not receive a grade. They have told us that they believe that institutions will consider a range of other evidence and information for these students to allow them to progress wherever possible.

When will I get my results?

We're working hard to get results out as soon as is possible – results won't be delayed after the dates they were expected in August, and ideally they will be issued a little earlier, so you can have the certainty you need.

Can I take my exams another time?

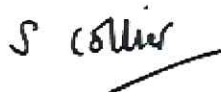
We are working with exam boards to offer additional exams in the autumn term as soon as it is possible to do so. We'll let you know about these in the coming weeks.

The information we have published covers GCSEs, AS and A levels, plus Extended Project Qualifications and Additional Extension Awards in maths. You can find out more about which qualifications and students are included, and the current arrangements for those which are not, in our [detailed guidance](#); along with answers to other questions that you and your parents or carers might have. We will keep updating our guidance as new

information becomes available, including to share details about vocational and technical qualifications as soon as we can, so please keep an eye on our website.

Please be reassured that the grades you get this summer will look exactly the same as in previous years, and they will have equal status with universities, colleges and employers, to help you move forward in your lives as planned.

With every best wish,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "S Collier". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish underneath the name.

Sally Collier
Chief Regulator, Ofqual