

1st January, 2021



Dear Parent/Carer

Coronavirus Update 39

Happy New Year! I trust that you and your family had a peaceful Christmas, and that you're able to look forward to 2021 with some degree of optimism even in these strangest of times.

Arrangements for the week beginning Monday 4th January

The main reason for writing to you now is to confirm what will be happening in school next week. In line with the Government announcement on Wednesday 30th December, **only key workers' children and "vulnerable" children will be able to attend school in person** next week. You can find out if your son or daughter qualifies under either criterion by checking [here](#).

If your son or daughter falls into either category and you would like them to attend school, **please let us know first** by e-mailing me at scbrierley@stmargaretsacademy.com. Please include some basic information to let us know why they qualify (eg "*I am currently employed as a full-time social worker*"). Thank you to those who have e-mailed us already – please accept my apologies if I haven't yet replied in person, but unless you hear otherwise, it will be fine for your child to attend school next week.

Some students have external exams at the start of term (post-16 BTEC exams and Year 10 OCR Sports Studies exams). Details about these exams can be found [here](#). We are expecting these exams will continue onsite as planned, so unless we notify you otherwise, **students due to take these exams should arrive in school 30 minutes before their exam is scheduled to start**. They will go home immediately after the exam.

As far as lessons are concerned, at this stage we are planning for **all lessons to continue as normal** in line with last term's timetable. Thus, if (for example) your son is in Year 11 and has Science at 8:35am on Monday morning, his teacher will still have a lesson ready for 8:35am on Monday morning and will teach it from the same room as usual *whether your son is onsite or at home*. We're aiming – ambitiously! – for as many lessons as possible to be live-streamed through Teams, so students who aren't in school should open Teams and access the lesson there. If there are any problems with this, the resources and learning activities will still be available through Teams Assignments, and we've asked teachers to monitor the Teams lesson channel for the duration of the lesson in case any student asks for help. Failing that, students can e-mail teachers – though we'd prefer communication to be directed through the Teams channel if at all possible. As usual, ITsupport@stmargaretsacademy.com will be on hand if there are any problems.

All this means that students who come to school in person will have a very different experience of school to any they may have had last summer. At that point we were instructed to provide "*childcare*"; this time, we are providing "*online education*". Key worker and "*vulnerable*" students who come into school must do so at the same time as usual, and report to the same classrooms as usual, for as normal a lesson as we can deliver under the circumstances.

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Arrangements for the week beginning Monday 11th January

As things stand, we're expecting Years 11 and 13 to be back in school from Monday 11th January. However, nothing is certain! – we'll confirm what we understand to be the current position in next week's *Coronavirus Update* (which will be published on Friday 8th January).

Mass testing of students

You may also have read that schools will provide mass Coronavirus testing for students when they are back in school. We will be making detailed plans for this next week, ready for a roll-out from Monday 11th or Monday 18th January. In the meantime, please be assured that **your son or daughter will only be tested with your consent** (which we'll be asking for next week); and please note that this testing does not replace other testing – so if, for example, your son becomes symptomatic, they should self-isolate and be tested as soon as possible by the NHS as usual, rather than sent into school for a test. Asymptomatic testing continues to be available for all those who live or work in Liverpool – more details about this can be found [here](#).

Other matters


The delayed start to the new term means that some of our published dates will need to change. The Year 9 assessments and Parents' Evening will need to be put back, and the GCSE options process will also be delayed. I anticipate being able to publish a revised calendar in *Coronavirus Update 40* (which will come out a week today). Likewise we had anticipated making *some* changes to the Year 8 timetable, as feedback has suggested that the 4:25pm finishes have been one of the less successful features of the current arrangements; any changes will now not be implemented until Monday 18th January at the earliest. We'll write out separately to Year 8 parents next week about this.

Finally...

I appreciate there is a lot to take in here! As ever, we're on hand to help if you need it; please contact admin@stmargaretsacademy.com if you have any questions, and we'll do our best to answer them as soon as we can.

We'll be in touch again at the end of next week. Until then, please enjoy what remains of today's Bank Holiday and the upcoming weekend.

Yours faithfully



Stephen Brierley
Principal.