

26th February, 2021



Dear Parent/Carer

## **Coronavirus Update 48**

Over the years, I've learned that the first week back after a break always seems to be busier than other weeks. Maybe there genuinely are more issues that find their way to school leaders' in-trays in the first week of each half-term, or maybe it's more a psychological phenomenon – I'm never too sure! But I *am* sure that this week has been one of the busiest I have ever known, with Government announcements about what schools must do materialising seemingly every day. Over the next few pages of this *Update*, I'll do my best to dissect them for you and let you know how we're responding.

### Coronavirus testing

On Monday, the Prime Minister announced that schools would re-open to students from Monday 8th March (more details below), and details about a school-based testing regime for students were also announced.

**We would strongly encourage all parents to give their consent for their son/daughter to be tested onsite next month.** A form for you to register your consent can be found [here](#); if you would like your child to be tested, please ensure it is completed by **3pm** on **Wednesday 3rd March**. Terms of consent and a privacy notice are attached to this e-mail. Please note that fresh consent is required even if you previously consented to testing when the Army visited us last term.

Testing at St Margaret's will operate as follows:

#### *Friday 5th March*

Consented students in Years 10, 11, 12 and 13 should come onsite to be tested according to the following schedule:

Time	Students	
9:00am to 9:30am	Year 10 students	Boys whose surnames start 'A', 'B', 'C', 'D', 'E', 'F' or 'G'
9:30am to 10:00am		Boys whose surnames start 'H', 'I', 'J', 'K', 'L', 'M' or 'N'
10:00am to 10:30am		Boys whose surnames start 'O', 'P', 'R', 'S', 'T', 'V', 'W' or 'Y'
10:45am to 11:15am	Year 13 students	Students whose surnames start 'A' to 'L'
11:15am to 11:45am		Students whose surnames start 'M' to 'Z'
12:30pm to 1:00pm	Year 12 students	Students whose surnames start 'A' to 'L'
1:00pm to 1:30pm		Students whose surnames start 'M' to 'Z'
1:45pm to 2:15pm	Year 11 students	Boys whose surnames start 'A', 'B', 'C', 'D', 'E', 'F' or 'G'
2:15pm to 2:45pm		Boys whose surnames start 'H', 'I', 'J', 'K', 'L', 'M' or 'N'
2:45pm to 3:15pm		Boys whose surnames start 'O', 'P', 'R', 'S', 'T', 'V', 'W' or 'Y'

Testing will take place in the Sports Hall, so students should enter our site *via* the Church Lane entrance and make their way down to the Cricket and Sports Centre. School uniform and face-masks must be worn. After being tested, students must return home.

#### *Monday 8th March*

Consented students in Years 7, 8 and 9 will be tested according to the following schedule:

Time	Students	
9:00am to 9:30am	Year 9 students	Boys whose surnames start 'A', 'B', 'C', 'D', 'E', 'F' or 'G'
9:30am to 10:00am		Boys whose surnames start 'H', 'I', 'J', 'K', 'L', 'M' or 'N'
10:00am to 10:30am		Boys whose surnames start 'O', 'P', 'R', 'S', 'T', 'V', 'W' or 'Y'
11:10am to 1:00pm	Year 7 students	Boys will be taken out of their lessons to be tested
1:25pm onwards	Year 8 students	Boys will be taken out of their lessons to be tested

Year 9 students will only be onsite for their tests that day – see below.

*Daily, from Thursday 11th March to Wednesday 24th March inclusive*

The Government has mandated that all students will be offered three tests on site, after which testing will take place at home. We will offer main school students their second and third tests in the Sports Hall from 2pm on their 'short day', so that we do not interrupt their learning time; post-16 students will be tested after their lessons on a day they are in school.

### Wider reopening

The following arrangements will be in place:

- Throughout the week beginning Monday 1st March, school will continue to be open to the children of key workers and to vulnerable children, as we are at present.
- Live lessons will continue as usual on Monday 1st, Tuesday 2nd and Wednesday 3rd March.
- **There will be no live lessons on Thursday 4th March** as we will be using that day for staff training. Teachers will set work through the Teams 'Assignments' area.
- Live lessons will resume for a final day on Friday 5th March, though we recognise that Key Stage 4 and post-16 students will have to miss some of their lessons to get tested at school (see above).
- **Face-to-face lessons will resume for all students except those in Year 9 on Monday 8th March.** For Year 9, only students who have consented to be tested will be permitted onsite on Monday 8th March. Testing will take place in the Sports Hall, so students should enter our site *via* the Church Lane entrance and make their way down to the Cricket and Sports Centre. School uniform and face-masks must be worn. After being tested, students must return home. Since Monday is Year 9's 'short day', some online Learning for Life and PE work will be set for students to work on during the rest of the day. **Face-to-face lessons will resume for Year 9 students on Tuesday 9th March.** We will remain open to key workers' and vulnerable children in Year 9 on Monday 8th March, from the time of their test until 2pm (when they would normally finish).
- **Timings for the day will remain as per last term** (*ie* staggered starts *etc*). We are likely to make some changes to the Year 8 timings soon, but there will be no changes for the first week back.

### Travel to and from school

Shane Fitzpatrick (Interim Director of Integrated Transport at the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority) has asked us to pass on the following advice to parents/carers as students return to school:

- Walk or Cycle to school if possible.
- Remember that children aged 11 and over must wear a face covering on public transport, although exemptions do apply.
- Plan ahead and check timetables for latest information.
- Leave more time for your journey in case services are busy.
- Pay by contactless or buy pre-paid tickets if you can – our young people's bus Solo and Term Time Tickets are now available on MetroSmart cards ([www.metro-smart.org.uk/solo-term-time](http://www.metro-smart.org.uk/solo-term-time)).

- If paying by cash, try to have the exact fare as drivers are not always giving change.
  - Be mindful of social distancing where possible.
  - Allow passengers to get off before boarding.
  - Some seats on the bus are not in use, please respect this. They will be clearly marked out.
  - Try to travel with the same group of friends each day and where possible sit in the same seats.
  - Be respectful to other passengers and staff.
  - Do not travel if you have any symptoms of Covid-19, or family members are showing symptoms.
- Sound advice indeed!

### Year 11 and Year 13 Exams

Another major Government announcement this week concerned how this summer's external exam grades will be awarded. We're still picking over the nuances of exactly what's been said, and so will have more to say on the subject in a future edition of *Coronavirus Update*. But for now, three things:

- please note the new dates for Results Days:
  - GCSE results will be published on Thursday 12th August; and
  - Post-16 results will be published on Tuesday 10th August;
 please do **not** book holidays if your son or daughter is due to pick up results on either of these days!
- Ofqual's Chief Regulator, Simon Lebus, has written a letter to students explaining the arrangements, which you can find [here](#); and
- please find attached an infographic explaining the process.

### Year 9 Options

Thank you to all Year 9 parents for your forbearance with our technological issues this week! If you weren't able to access Tuesday evening's Year 9 Options Evening, it is being repeated again at 4:30pm today (hopefully you'll get this letter before then!), and the two videos that were shown have been uploaded to our website [here](#) (towards the bottom of the page).

Since Tuesday's meeting, the Careers team have written out to all Year 9 parents explaining the help and guidance that's on offer. Please e-mail [careers@stmargaretsacademy.com](mailto:careers@stmargaretsacademy.com) if you haven't received this communication.

If you attended the evening and/or have watched the videos, the next steps are:

- use Morrisby (which can be found [here](#) – use the code starting 'MC...' that was included in the Careers team's recent communication), and then
- read the detailed subject information available on the main Year 9 options webpage [here](#).
- If you would like to request any extra assistance, there's a form through which you can do so [here](#) – after which,
- you're ready to complete the options form [here](#).

As ever, do get in touch if there's anything you'd like to discuss – we know how important it is to get these choices right!

### Keeping children safe online

Dr Silverstone writes:

*“In what will the penultimate instalment of information from [Thinkuknow](#), I'd like to share with you some steps you can take to keep young people safe online.*

*“First is the issue of **parental controls**. Parental controls have been designed to help you manage your child’s online activities. There are various types, some of which are free, but there are others which can be bought. However, nothing is totally fool proof, so they shouldn't replace the need for you to support and advise your child using the internet. For more information and step by step instructions on setting up parental controls, visit [Parental Controls & Privacy Settings Guides - Internet Matters](#).*

*“Next is the importance of **maintaining an ongoing conversation** with your child: continue to talk about the apps, games and sites they like to use; what they like and don’t like; and any concerns they have about being online; be honest with them about your own concerns and why you might want to take steps to keep them safe that they may resist. Discuss with them when to unfollow, block or report. For help starting this conversation, read [having a conversation with your child](#).*

*“Finally, **make sure they know where to go for support**: remind your children that they can always speak to you or an adult they trust if anything happens online that makes them feel worried or upset. For a breakdown of report services, such as CEOP, the NSPCC and True Vision, visit: [Supporting your child with reporting unwanted content online](#).”*

#### Kooth information session

Dr Silverstone has been working overtime, and has a second article this week! He writes:

*“I’m pleased to be able to invite you to attend a Zoom information session run by Emily Hawley, who is participation lead for the mental health service Kooth ([www.kooth.com](http://www.kooth.com)), on **Thursday March 4th at 5pm**.*

*“Kooth is an online mental wellbeing community which offers a wide variety of emotional and wellbeing support for students. Emily has been into school to give assemblies to many of our students to inform them about Kooth, and she is now offering to speak to all parents and carers of St Margaret’s students via Zoom to outline what Kooth can offer.*

*“The session is likely to last between 30 and 45 minutes, depending on the number of questions that are raised.*

*“Details for joining are as follows: click [here](#) to join the meeting, or use:*


- Meeting ID: 984 2041 8942
- Passcode: K00TH123!

*“If you have any questions, please contact me at [safeguarding@stmargaretsacademy.com](mailto:safeguarding@stmargaretsacademy.com)”*

#### Finally...

I appreciate that these letters seem to be getting progressively longer each week! I don’t *think* that’s due to me rambling more as I get older, but... Thank you for your perseverance in reading this far, and I’ll endeavour to be briefer next week (and address the issue of summer schools too)!

Yours faithfully



Stephen Brierley  
Principal.