



Diocese of St. Albans



ST MARY'S
CE HIGH SCHOOL

23 March 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

As you know we are now closed to all students except those deemed vulnerable and those who are children of key workers. The Government Department for Education have asked Headteachers to send information out to parents/carers: click [here](#) for the link. Please ensure your children respect the social isolation routines as well, and are not out with friends.

If you applied for a place with us because you are a key worker, we have been able to accommodate this and you can send your child in to us on the day/s you requested from tomorrow. **Please see Mr Tilbury's letter that is going to these parents/carers only which will give details of the strategies we will put in place to increase the 'social distancing' over the coming weeks.**

If you did not apply for a place, then you must not send your child in, even if you are a key worker. I cannot stress this enough: if you are a Key Worker and have an emergency need, you will need to call the school and ask if we can take your child, and from when. I am running on a skeleton staff and we cannot cope with extra numbers without some warning.

Student work

This is all being set on Show My Homework. This has been written in previous letters and posted on social media, but we are still getting emails asking about where the work is. I understand that today the Show My Homework website was very slow; I imagine there is a much greater use of it nationally and it is not coping! Please be patient and get your child/children to log on and do the work set, but it may take a day or two for the website to be fully operational. Please do not email staff directly asking questions about the work; Show My Homework has the facility for students to message staff with questions and they will respond when they are able to. I do not want staff overwhelmed with emails: many colleagues teach 300 to 400 students and I am sure that you will share my concern that teaching staff should not have to deflect their efforts in order to respond to a high volume of emails.

Staff wellbeing

Staff are coming in at the levels required to care for students that have to be in. The rest of the time they will be working from home. I am mindful of their wellbeing as much as yours and your children at a time when recreation facilities are all shut and we are not able to see loved ones or friends. I re-iterate what I said above, **please do not email staff directly about the work – students have the facility to ask questions on Show My Homework and staff will respond via that.**

ASPIRE • CHALLENGE • SUCCEED

Lieutenant Ellis Way, Cheshunt, Hertfordshire EN7 5FB t: 01992 629124 f: 01992 643354
e: admin@st-maryshigh.herts.sch.uk w: www.st-maryshigh.herts.sch.uk
Head Teacher: Mr Nicholas Simms B.Sc. (Hons), NPQH

'Students feel happy and safe at school' OFSTED 2019
'An exceptionally inclusive and caring community' SIAMS Inspection (2020)

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Your own and your family's wellbeing

I said before, and I say again, you need to look after yourselves as well as your children. We are creating a website page with links to help this, but in the meantime, you might find this resource helpful:

<https://www.cognita.com/cognita-be-well/resources-for-families/>

Year 11 and Year 13 exams

The Government went public on Friday about this – you know as much as we do at this stage! Headteachers have had an email from 'Herts for Learning' and they will be working with us and supporting us over this. You do not need to email in and ask about 'what next'; I promise you we will keep you updated on what we are doing. The priority in the early part of this week is to ensure that we get the care for the vulnerable and key worker children sorted, we will then look at what we need to do with this aspect of our work.

Continued opening for vulnerable and key worker children

I am looking at what we do after 3 April and will write out with that information in due course, hopefully this week.

Staying in touch

We will continue to send letters by email and post information on social media to stay in touch, so please keep monitor these. I will not necessarily write every day to you, but as and when needed. For your information:

- St Mary's Facebook page is here: <https://www.facebook.com/stmaryscehighschool/>
- St Mary's review page on Facebook is here: https://www.facebook.com/pg/stmaryscehighschool/reviews/?ref=page_internal
- Twitter: our Twitter name is @SMHSch

If you would like to post any comments on either of the Facebook pages that would help keep our morale up, please do so!

Yours faithfully



Nicholas Simms

Headteacher

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