



3rd April 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

I hope you are all remaining well and in good spirits. This newsletter has some 'business' items at the start, and an Easter message at the end.

Easter Holiday

As I mentioned before, we will not be setting work over the Easter Holiday. Some staff are setting 'optional work' which may help to keep your children busy with activities if they need it, but Easter is a holiday and there is no expectation for the students to work at the same rate as during term time, if at all. It is important that you, your children and the staff all get some rest and 'down-time' over the Easter Holiday, wherever possible. We are all limited in the amount of time we can spend outside at the moment, and the Scouts website has lots of ideas for indoor activities here:

<https://www.scouts.org.uk/activities>

Work

Understandably we are still getting a few queries from parents/carers about the work. I would strongly advise your child to follow the school timetable, both in terms of timing of work (i.e. the times of the lesson) and the amount of work. I have heard about a student trying to complete five hours of Geography work in one day. If a week (or longer) worth of work has been set, then each student needs to only do one hour of that *on the day they would usually have Geography*. There is no need to complete it all on one day – and indeed that is not productive.

The hours each child studies a subject in a fortnight are as follows, and should guide you about how much time should be spent on each subject.

KS3

- English 7
- Maths 7
- Science 6
- Languages 4
- RS 2 (4 in yr9)
- History 3
- Geography 3
- Drama 2

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- Music 2
- Art 2
- Core PE 4 (2 in yr9)
- Technology 4
- IT 2
- PSHCE 2

KS4

- English 8
- Maths 8
- Science 8
- RS 4
- Core PE 2
- Option subjects 5

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 these resources helpful:

- <https://www.cognita.com/cognita-be-well/resources-for-families/>
- <https://www.justtalkherts.org/news/looking-after-your-mental-health-during-coronavirus.aspx>

Finally...

St Mary's School would like to say a big 'Thank You' to the many parents/carers who are working in essential services at the moment, playing a big part in keeping the country going and looking after the vulnerable and the unwell. Your work is so important and we thank you for your efforts.

Easter marks the end of Lent, and celebrates the resurrection of Christ; we would typically mark this in many and varied ways, including church services, family visits and meals, days out and other social events. The restrictions on our life that we are having to adjust to so quickly will continue well beyond the holiday, which means many of these Easter celebrations (that until a few weeks ago we were expecting to enjoy), will not happen. I hope that within the limitations of our current lives, you can still all find joy in the season. One of my favourite hymns is *Dear Lord and Father of Mankind*. The last verse asks God to:

***Breathe through the heats of our desire
thy coolness and thy balm;
let sense be dumb, let flesh retire;
speak through the earthquake, wind, and fire,
O still, small voice of calm!***

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Never, in my memory, have we been in more need of 'coolness and balm' and I think that it is important for us all, at this incredibly difficult time, to be listening for the 'still, small voice of calm' through the social 'earthquake' that we are experiencing at the moment. Whatever faith you have, or if you have none, please look for those moments of joy over the coming weeks.

Yours faithfully



Nicholas Simms
Headteacher

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