



Saint Felix School

Headmaster: Mr James Harrison BA (Hons)

23rd December 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians

I am sorry to disturb your holiday, but I thought I would update you regarding the slightly altered arrangements for the start of next term. You may be aware from the media reports that the Government has recommended a staggered re-entry of secondary school pupils into school after Christmas. In addition, the school will now have the facility to conduct regular mass-testing on staff and pupils from the Senior Department based on weekly testing for those staff which come into close contact with pupils on a regular basis and daily testing for seven consecutive school days for any pupils from the same bubble as someone with a positive Covid-19 test. Please note that the pupils will not be subjected to weekly testing as is the directive from the Government.

Whereas I welcome this initiative, both to keep the community as safe as possible and to minimise disruption to education, as things stand, the school does not even know when it will receive its testing equipment or indeed how many tests it will be given. We have identified a safe and compliant area of the school to conduct mass-testing and I am currently working on meeting the requirements for staffing which include those responsible for testing, recording data and cleaning the testing area. We anticipate mass-testing creating seven different jobs and it has been difficult to organise everything for implementation on the first day back after Christmas. As things stand, we have had very little guidance and so we have had to seek information rather than receive it. However, I attended a meeting earlier this week with the Deputy Head, the Chair of Governors, a member of the boarding staff and Anita Carr and we are confident that we will be able to have provision for mass-testing of staff and pupils from the first day back after Christmas (Monday, 4th January). This is, of course, conditional on the testing equipment being delivered from the Government.

Both staff and pupils will have to consent to testing and my PA will be sending out a consent form and privacy notice during the holidays for those in Years 11, 12 and 13 which should be returned to her or the school by the beginning of the new term. Years 7, 8, 9 and 10 will receive these documents during the first week back. To reiterate, the testing is not compulsory, but any member of a year group bubble which has "collapsed" due to a member of that bubble receiving a positive Covid-19 test result will have to self-isolate should they refuse the seven days of consecutive testing provided now by the school.

As per the Government's directive, all members of Years 7, 8, 9 and 10 will be educated remotely for the first week back, returning to school on Monday, 11th January. Years 11, 12 and 13 will be allowed to return on Monday, 4th January for face-to-face teaching as planned due to the fact that these year groups will be sitting public examinations in the summer. I have said on numerous occasions that I believe Saint Felix staff are extremely innovative and thorough in their delivery of remote learning and so I do not expect an adverse impact on the education of the pupils in those year groups that cannot return for a week. However, it should be noted that this is not an optional week and all pupils in those year groups should follow their full timetable using devices with a webcam and fully operational audio,

including a microphone. I do not think phones are the best way to access remote learning, with a home computer, laptop, or tablet much more preferable.

The children of critical workers and those classed as vulnerable from Years 7, 8, 9 and 10 are permitted to attend school physically. This is optional and I would like to make it clear that those who come into school will access the remote learning from their usual classrooms; they will not be taught separately as we do not have the staffing to teach a hybrid model for one week. Accordingly, the children of critical workers and those classed as vulnerable must attend school from Monday, 4th January to Friday, 8th January with a device able to access the remote learning platforms. Buses will run as planned and lunches will be provided. Pupils may go home after their lessons at 4pm, but there will be after-school prep sessions for those who cannot be picked up until their usual time or those returning home on the school bus.

During the spring and summer terms, the critical worker and vulnerable children were supported as one bubble, this now cannot happen and so those coming into school need to understand that they will be supervised by their various subject teachers who will be conducting remote learning from their timetabled classroom.

If you wish for your child from Year 7, 8, 9 and 10 to come into school in order to access remote learning under staff supervision as a critical worker or vulnerable child, you must by Wednesday, 30th December email my PA (ctansley@stfelix.co.uk) to indicate your intention. This facility will only be offered to children of critical workers and vulnerable children.

We have tried our best to accommodate the new requirements of the Government and we look forward to welcoming back the examination year groups, as planned, on Monday, 4th January and the rest of the Senior Department a week later on Monday, 11th January.

The children in the nursery, Prep and Pre-Prep will return as planned on Monday, 4th January with no changes to their education or timetables. I hasten to add that these are the arrangements across the school based on the information I have as I write to you today. The Government may give new or changing advice between now and the first day back. I will, of course, write to you if there are any changes to the arrangements above. There is no indication there will be, but, in all aspects of this pandemic, things can change at a moment's notice and even the mass-testing of secondary school pupils was only communicated to me by the Department for Education after I had seen the announcement on Sky News.

Please do try to have a wonderful Christmas and New Year.

Best wishes,



James Harrison
Headmaster