



# ST THOMAS MORE CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

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Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope you and your families are well and have enjoyed the summer break. We are all looking forward to the start of the new school year and especially welcoming our new Year 7 students. I am writing to remind you of some of the changes in how school will be operating when we return next week.

## **Mixing and Bubbles**

The requirement to keep year groups separate has ceased so this will allow us to return to a more normal way of delivering the curriculum in school. Year groups will no longer be in fixed rooms of the school which will allow for a return to full specialist facilities in Science, Music, Art and Technology. We are going to retain some of the positive aspects of last year's way of working by continuing to have zoned areas for year groups at breaks and lunchtime and also a staggered start to first lunchtime and the end of the school day.

## **Face Coverings**

We will continue to ask students and staff to wear face coverings in indoor communal areas only, for a period of time. With the removal of bubbles, year groups will be mixing in corridors so we feel that wearing face coverings will help to reduce the chance of someone with the virus passing it on.

We will no longer be asking students and staff to wear face coverings in classrooms but will support anyone who wishes to continue to do so. Should there be an outbreak of Covid in school a decision may be made in conjunction with Public Health to reinstate face coverings temporarily in classrooms.

In a change to the original Government guidance, face coverings will continue to be required on school buses and public transport.

## **Control Measures**

The guidance specifies four control measures that schools should continue to implement:

1. Ensure good hand and respiratory hygiene for everyone
2. Maintain appropriate cleaning regimes
3. Keep occupied spaces well ventilated
4. Follow Public Health advice on testing, self isolating and managing confirmed cases of Covid 19.

## **Tracing, Close Contacts and Isolation**

Schools are no longer be expected to undertake contact tracing other than in exceptional circumstances. As with positive cases in any other setting NHS Test and Trace will work with the positive case to identify close contacts.

Children under the age of 18 years and 6 months old will no longer be required to self isolate if they are identified as a close contact. Instead children will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace, informed they have been in close contact with a positive case and advised to take a PCR test. They do not have to isolate either before the test or while waiting for the result.

In summary students will not have to miss school because they are self isolating as a contact of a positive case unless they test positive themselves.



## Asymptomatic Testing

**Please can I ask that all students take a lateral flow test before they return to school.**

As you know, when pupils return schools are required to offer two onsite lateral flow tests 3 – 5 days apart. The first of these tests will on their first day of return, so in order to accommodate this schools are able to have a staggered return for students. At St Thomas More we have the testing capacity to do two main school year groups during the school day so the return of pupils will be as follows:

Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> September – Year 7. Year 13 to attend school from 1.30pm for testing only and then return for lessons on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup>.

Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> September – Year 8 and Year 11.

Friday 10<sup>th</sup> September – Year 9 and Year 10.

Monday 13<sup>th</sup> September – Year 12.

As in March, this testing is voluntary and no students will be prevented from returning to school if they do not take part in onsite testing. We will assume that parents who gave permission for March onsite testing continue to do so, but if this has changed please contact school via [info@stmacademy.org.uk](mailto:info@stmacademy.org.uk). Equally if you did not give permission in March but now wish to do so please contact school via [info@stmacademy.org.uk](mailto:info@stmacademy.org.uk).

Parents of our new Year 7 students have been contacted separately and asked to complete a consent form.

**Following these onsite tests students are strongly encouraged to continue twice weekly testing at home and the government will review this at the end of September.**

## Covid Contingency Framework

I have attached the school's Covid Contingency Framework for your information which outlines the range of measures that could be taken should there be a number of connected Covid cases in school.

I would like to thank you again for your continued support and I hope that the new school year brings a return to a much more normal experience for all in our school community.

Yours sincerely



Mr D Watson  
Headteacher

