



# ST THOMAS MORE CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

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26<sup>th</sup> February 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope you and your families are all well.

## **Full Reopening of School from 8<sup>th</sup> March**

As you know all students will return to school from Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March. While we are still finalising exact details of the week I'm able to share some important information about the return to school.

### **Phased Return of Year Groups**

Government guidance states that students who opt into the test must have a negative first test before resuming face to face education. Unfortunately this means we can't have students already in classes and remove them for their first test, instead they must be tested on arrival to school and wait for their result before joining a class.

Due to the sizes of our year groups and the large numbers of students who rely on school buses, we don't have the ability to first test more than one main school year group and one sixth form year group each day.

We are therefore planning a phased return of year groups as follows: Monday 8<sup>th</sup> Year 11 and Year 13, Tuesday Year 10 and Year 12, Wednesday Year 7, Thursday Year 8 and Friday Year 9.

The critical worker and vulnerable students who have been attending school during lockdown will continue to do so until they can join their full year group on its return.

### **Remote Learning**

During the week of 8<sup>th</sup> remote learning will continue for year groups until they return to school. There will however be a reduction in live sessions during that period as teachers will be required to carry out other activities in school including supervising critical worker groups and supporting the mass testing of students.

### **Systems of Control**

On their return to school pastoral staff will remind and reinforce the different control measures that are in place to reduce the risk of Covid being spread within school.

Most of the systems of control will be as they were in the Autumn Term including year group bubbles, break/lunchtimes and start/end of day routines.

Hand Hygiene: Students will be regularly reminded about handwashing and sanitising including on arrival to school, at break times and before lunch.

Ventilation: Increasing evidence is suggesting the risk of infection in the open air is very, very low. By extension the better the ventilation and fresh air that can circulate indoors the lower the risk so ventilation of all rooms and especially classrooms will continue to be a high priority.



## Face Coverings

As you know, in the autumn term students were required to wear face coverings in all indoor communal areas other than when eating in the dining hall and sixth form common room. This has now been extended to classrooms for both staff and students with the following exceptions:

- If a member of staff or student has a medical condition that prevents them from wearing a face covering. Those students who were previously exempt will continue to be so but I am aware that some other students may have medical conditions that allow them to wear face coverings for short periods of time but not extended periods. If your child is in this situation please contact Miss Hagan via [info@stmacademy.org.uk](mailto:info@stmacademy.org.uk)
- If a teacher feels a face covering inhibits a whole class explanation they may remove their face covering as long as they are 2 metres from the nearest student before replacing it once the explanation is completed.
- For a small number of students, staff wearing a face covering inhibits communication so staff may remove their face covering.

We strongly recommend that students bring more than one face covering each day in case one becomes damp, and also a small plastic bag to store used coverings.

## Mass Testing

Details of the mass testing were included in my letter on Tuesday which is available on the school website. If you are happy for your child to be part of the testing programme but have not yet provided consent please do so via the Parentmail form that was sent earlier in the week.

## Attendance

School attendance is compulsory for all students when their year group returns from 8<sup>th</sup> March and the usual rules on school attendance apply. Pastoral staff will be contacting CEV students who are advised to stay at home.

Exact arrangements for the week of 8<sup>th</sup> March will be shared next week but if you have any general questions please contact school via [info@stmacademy.org.uk](mailto:info@stmacademy.org.uk)

## Summer Examination Grades

The formal announcement that summer examination grades will be based on Centre Assessment of actual performance of students was made yesterday. As soon as we have been able to look into the detail of the documents I will be writing to Year 13 and Year 11 students and their parents with a summary of the main points.

Yours sincerely



Mr D Watson  
Headteacher