

Dear Students and Parents/Carers

We hope that you and your family are staying safe and well and that you have managed to develop a new routine that enables you to continue to complete your work and remain positive. As we keep saying, these are unprecedented and challenging times. However, we can all see that steps are being taken that will eventually enable us to resume our usual routines. We are all really looking forward to being able to welcome you back to school where you can continue your studies and most importantly benefit from the support of your friends and teachers as well as take advantage of all the amazing opportunities that our Sixth Form has to offer.

As we approach the end of the short summer half term, we would like to update you with the latest information that we have about the plans we have for next half-term.

The current government guidance states that: -

***“Secondary schools, sixth forms and colleges will also work towards the possibility of providing some face-to-face contact with young people in Year 10 and Year 12 to help them prepare for exams next year.”***

The Senior Leadership Teams of both schools are currently considering how this “face to face contact” will work in the context of our large and unique Associated Sixth Form. Whilst it remains our ambition to bring groups of students into school as soon as possible, at the time of writing we await further guidance from the government regarding a safe return for students in secondary schools. It will be necessary to plan carefully in accordance with the government’s regulations and to explore the provision we can offer; staff will also need to be trained in managing the social distancing measures that will be necessary. With this in mind, we are not anticipating a return to school for Year 12 students during the week commencing 1 June.

Whatever plans we are able to implement after that date, they will not involve what you might regard as a ‘normal timetable’ but we would hope there will be some sessions and/or student consultations with subject specialists.

It is clear therefore that remote learning will also need to continue for some time and to help you understand the next steps and the amount of work that we feel is appropriate, we have set out the following protocols:

- Work provided will cover new content and units of work. This is to enable you to progress through the specification content.
- We expect you to be making the best use of your time and we will be encouraging you to work between 3 and 4 hours a day, plus some private study time, and to allow time for activity and breaks from screen time.
- Broadly speaking, each subject will set 6 hours of work per week; some of this work might point you in the direction of personal research and extension work.
- Your work should be dated with clear instructions for the amount of time to be spent on it and when it should be completed by.
- Each subject should set and provide formal feedback on two significant pieces of work during the summer half term.
- Work should be uploaded to Moodle for St Aidan’s teachers and the school website link for teachers based at St John Fisher.

In planning your work for next half term, we continue to be aware that some of you could still be going through challenging situations due to the impact of COVID-19 or other family circumstances. We also appreciate that not all of you will not be able to readily access technology or even have a quiet space to continue your studies. It is for these reasons that our Senior Tutors have been and will continue to be in contact with you offering their support and listening to any concerns or challenges you might have been facing.

Through the discussions we have had with you, we believe you have valued the work that has been set. You have told us that you particularly appreciate the wide variety of learning styles being offered: guided learning through narrated PowerPoints, research opportunities, practice questions and carefully planned worksheets.

With regard to other strategies for interactive delivery and support, we are going to be developing “face to face” sessions using Teams and staff are already completing the relevant training to ensure that this is delivered in a safe and controlled manner. This may involve you being invited to join sessions at specific times. Teams will allow you to collaborate and seek further clarification from subject specialists by using the live audio and chat facilities. We also hope to record some of these sessions to support those students who are not able to take part in live meetings. We will be issuing you with further information about these sessions and how you can access them in due course but in preparation for this development it is important that you familiarise yourself with both schools’ safeguarding protocols.

There are also several other opportunities for you to engage in your academic studies. Many of you have enrolled on the EPQ course and initial tutorials will begin after-half term. There are also some outstanding resources and opportunities being offered by our Careers Department and these are updated on a weekly basis in the Sixth Form newsletter.

It is important that you continue to focus on your academic studies. You will no doubt already be thinking about potential UCAS applications as well as other options and career choices for post-18 and the work that you are being asked to do now will have a really positive impact on your future options. Please don’t hesitate to contact us if you need further support or clarification about any issues or concerns that you might have.

In the meantime, enjoy the Bank Holiday and the half-term break.

Kindest regards,

Mr Kidman

Mr Beetles

