



St John Fisher Catholic High School

EDUCATING FOR LIFE

Hookstone Drive, Harrogate, HG2 8PT

Head Teacher: Mr S Mort B.A. (Hons), NPQH

Telephone: (01423) 887254 Website: www.sjfchs.org.uk Email: office@sjfchs.org.uk

15th October 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

I hope this letter finds you and your families well. As we come to the end of our first half-term at St John Fisher, I would like to thank you for the warm welcome, which Mrs Luke and myself have received, and for your patience and understanding as we have responded to the unprecedented situations that have unfolded as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

COVID-19 Update

Across our school community of over 1500 students and 135 members of staff there have been 8 confirmed positive cases of COVID-19 since our return in September. For most of these cases, we have managed to avoid dismissing entire year groups or whole classes, by spending time identifying close contacts from teachers' seating plans and collating information regarding students' social contact on school transport and around the school site.

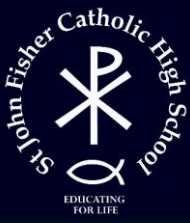
During last Sunday afternoon, we received notification of two confirmed positive cases of COVID-19. Following advice from NYCC and the Public Health Team we took the difficult decision to close a full year group bubble for one day to enable us to access the required information and to correctly identify those students who had been in close contact with the student who tested positive for Covid-19. We have been advised to adopt the same approach should we be informed of a positive case, outside of school hours, in future.

Should your child receive confirmation of a positive Covid-19 case out of school hours, please inform us via our designated Covid-19 email address covid@sjfchs.org.uk. Please note that this email address is solely for this purpose, all other communication should be addressed to office@sjfchs.org.uk for Year 7-11 or 6thform@sjfchs.org.uk

In circumstances where we need to send a significant number of students home during the school day to self-isolate or are advised that a full year group should remain at home to self-isolate whilst we identify close contacts, we will alert you via an email rather than via an individual telephone call. Therefore, please ensure we have your most up to date email address and that you check your email regularly for messages from the school.

During these difficult times it is important that we recognise the value of all members of our Fisher's community and that we make positive choices which will contribute to minimising the transmission of COVID – 19. To this end, may I take this opportunity to reinforce some of the safety messages which were outlined in the full school opening guide in September.





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- If your child or a member of your household is displaying Covid19 symptoms, you must inform school and keep your child at home for 10 days. Other members of the household should self-isolate for 14 days from when your child first became ill. It is the responsibility of parents/carers to seek a test (within 3-5 days of symptoms appearing), to engage with the NHS test and trace process and to inform the school of the result of a test.
 - If your child or a member of your household tests positive, you must inform school. They should follow the 'stay at home: guidance for households with a confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection' and must continue to self-isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of their symptoms. The 10-day period starts from the day when your child first became ill. If they still have a high temperature, they should keep self-isolating until their temperature returns to normal. Other members of their household should continue self-isolating for the full 14 days.
 - If your child tests negative, feels well and no longer has COVID-19 symptoms, they can return to school. However, we will require proof of a negative test result before your child returns to school. If your child tests negative but still feels unwell, they could still have another virus (such as a cold or flu) in which case it is still best for them to self-isolate and not return to school until they are better.

If your child has tested positive for Covid-19, it is important that they take the time to recover. It is therefore not our expectation that they engage in remote learning. Likewise, if your child is absent due to an illness which is not related to COVID-19, we will not provide remote learning or expect them to complete schoolwork at home.

Setting work for Self-Isolating students

We have made the decision to use Microsoft Teams to support remote learning since it is fully compatible with our school email system and is free to access. It also appears to be the most effective platform to conduct lessons and provides a consistent approach of delivery with St Aidan's, our partner in the Associated Sixth Form.

Microsoft Teams has three key aspects which can be used to support remote learning:

- The first is an ability to send immediate messages to students to direct them to the work for the day.
- The second is the ability to upload lessons, possibly in the form of a PowerPoint, and resources that students can access to complete learning at home.
- The third is the ability for teachers to stream live lessons and record lessons for students to watch later.





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Teachers will provide learning for students who are required to self-isolate alongside planning and delivering face to face lessons in school. Therefore, teachers will upload learning to Microsoft Teams as soon as is practical. Where possible, this will be the same work and resources which they are delivering to classes at school. Where staff themselves are self-isolating, they will set their normal lesson to be delivered by a supply teacher or cover supervisor. Unfortunately, at this stage, teachers will not be able to mark work or provide feedback alongside teaching a full timetable of lessons in school.

Whilst some students are familiar with utilising Microsoft Teams, this is not the case for all. Tutorials have therefore been provided for all students during form time and PSHCE lessons on how to engage with Teams, where to locate the messages posted by teachers and how to access the uploaded learning. We understand that not all students have access to electronic devices at home or may need to share a device with siblings. Teams can be accessed on a smart phone, tablet or a desktop/laptop computer.

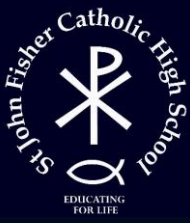
Unfortunately, we do not currently have the hardware (and in some places connectivity) to provide live lessons across all curriculum areas. However, this is not a requirement of the Department for Education. Amanda Spielman, the Chief Inspector of schools, recently stated that "it is not sensible or realistic to expect schools to provide a full on-screen taught programme for all absent pupils." Lessons will therefore, in the first instance, be uploaded as files as we develop our capacity to move towards live/recorded lessons.

In the event of a student being invited to take part in a live lesson on Microsoft Teams, there will be a requirement to adhere to safeguarding procedures. Students who participate in live lessons should not use their video facility, although they are able to ask questions either via audio or the chat function. Also, please be assured that live lessons will not involve the streaming of students who are currently in the classroom – in all instances students at home will only be able to view the teacher, the whiteboard or resources shared as part of the lesson.

The Governors are fully aware of the limitations of our current IT infrastructure and that it will require considerable investment for us to deliver the remote learning provision which we aspire to provide. We are working together to produce a strategic plan of action to enhance our existing capabilities. We have already started a series of audits of our existing provision. These audits will aim to establish the capacity of our current IT infrastructure, staff training needs, the extent to which our students have access to ICT at home and other important considerations in order to develop our remote learning provision.

The implementation of this strategic plan will require a phased approach over the coming months. As we implement each phase, we will inform you of developments and ensure students and parents/carers can fully engage with remote learning.





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We also recognise that as a profession, teachers were trained to deliver face to face lessons in classrooms in schools. As such, like many schools across the country, we will need to invest in professional development to enable our teachers to effectively engage with the necessary technology. We have already provided training sessions to support our teachers in utilising Microsoft Teams during the past few weeks.

As we work towards enhancing our remote learning provision, I can assure you that all students who are required to self-isolate will be provided with learning at home.

For remote learning enquiries relating to specific subject areas, please contact the Head of Department via office@sjfchs.org.uk

Thank you again for your patience and understanding during this very testing time.

Yours sincerely

Mr S Mort
Headteacher

