



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

12th January 2021

Dear Parents/Carers

COVID-19 Update Spring Term 2021

I hope this update finds you and your family safe and well.

Following the Prime Minister's announcement regarding the national lockdown and closure of schools, we have been busy revising our strategic plans for this term, including:

- Ensuring we provide remote learning provision for all year groups
- Providing support for the children of key workers and vulnerable students on the school site
- Undertaking training, and preparing for the introduction of COVID 19 lateral flow tests
- Responding to the government's decision to cancel public examinations for summer 2021
- Revising the school calendar for the first half of the spring term

I appreciate that this continues to be an incredibly demanding time for all our families and that supporting your child's education at home can be incredibly difficult and frustrating at times.

I therefore hope the information in this update will be helpful during the current lockdown period.

Remote Learning

Shortly after commencing the post of Headteacher, I sent a letter to parents/carers which provided an honest and transparent 'positional statement' with regards to the remote learning provision at the school. Since October we have invested heavily in improvements to our school IT system, new technology, and staff training to facilitate this new way of learning. Staff have embraced these developments and are responding positively to our minimum expectation that they upload learning to Teams. We are, however, also encouraging teachers to deliver:

- a minimum of one live lesson per subject per week for Years 7-9*
- live teaching for 50% of the timetable for Years 10 & 11
- live lessons for most of the timetable for Years 12 & 13

* Where a student only has one timetabled lesson per week, the expectation will be that they receive one live lesson every two weeks





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Current educational research suggests that a blend of synchronous (live delivery) and asynchronous learning (tasks set for students to complete at own pace) is the best practice. Live learning engages students, makes it easier for them to structure and regulate their learning and most importantly has a significant impact on student well-being. However, we do recognise that this can be quite high pressure for both students and teachers.

Asynchronous learning allows students to have more flexibility in how they complete tasks and supports limited home access to digital equipment. Therefore, our provision for remote learning is modelled on this blended approach, which is regarded as being most beneficial for students.

Whilst inevitably there will be some technical hitches and possible staff absence, students will receive far more live lessons than in the previous lockdown. Please consider that teachers may also be contending with wi-fi or technical issues when delivering lessons from home alongside the fact that they are also required to be in school for part of the week to support the children of key workers and vulnerable students.

Please be assured that we are aware that some students may be having technical difficulties. If you do have any technical difficulties accessing the online provision, please contact us at the office@sjfchs.org.uk e-mail address and mark your e-mail for the attention of **I.T. Team**.

We have received a limited number of laptops in response to our request from the Department for Education. As recommended by the DfE, we have prioritised disadvantaged learners and those with no digital access. Thank you to those parents who have voluntarily donated laptops to the school. Should you be able to donate a device which you feel would support the learning of students or if you do not have the necessary device and/or data to access lessons, please contact us at the office@sjfchs.org.uk e-mail address and mark your e-mail for the attention of the **Teaching and Learning Lead**. Please consider that we have received a large number of requests for laptops and are responding to these on a student need basis.

For any subject specific remote learning queries please contact us at the office@sjfchs.org.uk e-mail address and mark your e-mail for the attention of the relevant **Head of Department**.

Whilst the information outlined above provides a brief overview of our remote learning provision, it is our intention to share a more comprehensive guidance within the coming days.

Attendance

We have learnt from the previous period of school closure how important it is for students to maintain structure and routine in their day. Full engagement is vital to minimise any gaps in learning. During the current lockdown period, schools are required to submit daily attendance data to the DfE. If your child is unwell, or has a medical appointment, please notify us in the usual way.





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There is a compulsory requirement for students in Years 7 to 11 to register for all their lessons. Consequently, staff will record student attendance for all their timetabled lessons with these year groups. Student engagement will be monitored, and any concerns will be addressed with individual students and parent/carers to ensure that students are accessing all opportunities to progress their learning. Please could we ask for your support in reminding your child:

- to follow their normal timetable,
- to have necessary equipment for each lesson,
- take breaks as they would if they were in school,
- remove access to distractions, and, where possible, provide a quiet place for them to study.

Pastoral support

All students in Years 7 – 11 will receive fortnightly contact from their Head of Year and/or Form Tutor to ensure they are safe, well and engaging in remote learning. Sixth Form tutors will contact their students at least once per half-term. Vulnerable students, including those with SEND, will be contacted more regularly.

Please remember that the Heads of Year and Sixth Form Tutors are available to support your child. If they require further support, advice, or guidance, please contact them via office@sjfchs.org.uk Please ensure your e-mail is marked for the attention of the relevant **Head of Year**.

Head of Year 7 - Mr Walsh
Head of Year 8 - Mr Hussey
Head of Year 9 - Miss Hayward-Shott
Head of Year 10 - Mr Owen
Head of Year 11 - Miss Lewis

Covid-19 Lateral Flow Tests

We are currently working on establishing rapid testing procedures, using the Lateral Flow Device (LFD) tests which provide a result in approximately 30 minutes. In developing systems for St. John Fisher, we are taking advice from the appropriate public health bodies and adhering to the relevant guidance published by the Department for Education, NYCC and others.

Please rest assured that we will not commence any testing until we are completely satisfied that we have robust procedures in place that are fully compliant with the guidance and best practice and that our risk assessments have been updated and approved accordingly. Furthermore, before any LFD testing takes place, we will ensure we receive consent from parents/carers (or the student depending on their age).





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School Calendar of Events

Due to the current school closure, we have had to revisit our school calendar for this half-term. Please see dates of some key events below:

- The Year 9 Parents Evening scheduled for 14th January has been moved to 22nd April
- The Year 12 Parents Evening will be held, as scheduled, on 4th February
- The Year 8 Options Evening will be held, as scheduled, on 24th February
- The Year 8 Parents Evening will be held, as scheduled, on 16th March

The format of these events will be shared with parents/carers in due course

Finally, thank you for all the messages of support and gratitude, which we have received during the past week, these have been greatly appreciated by the staff. Thank you also, for your continued patience and understanding as we respond to the pandemic and changing educational landscape.

I am truly proud of our school community and the way we are all working together in our battle against the COVID-19 pandemic. Hopefully, the mass vaccinations planned over the next few months will allow some of the restrictions that we currently face to be lifted and we can look forward to better times ahead together in 2021.

As always should you have any questions, queries, or concerns please contact us on office@sjfchs.org.uk which will ensure we receive, acknowledge and forward your correspondence to the relevant member of staff.

Yours sincerely

Mr S Mort
Headteacher

