

Dear Parents and Carers

I am writing to you at the end of another year that has brought a number of challenges in how we respond to Covid and ensure that all of our young people continue to be educated to be best of our ability. As you are aware the situation is changing daily and we continue to respond to directions from both Public Health England and the DfE. We daily assess our whole school Risk Assessment and this can be found on our school website. Contained within this document is how we are responding to ensure the safety of all pupils and staff along with our Contingency Plan should there be any further outbreaks or a need for further remote learning.

Despite all of this the girls and boys have responded magnificently since returning to school in September. The vast majority were extremely happy to be back into some kind of routine and staff have focused on reducing gaps in pupils' knowledge so that any 'missed' learning is quickly caught up. To support this the Government has set aside additional funding for schools, referred to as the 'catch up premium' and we have used this to practice small group and individual targeted support through online/face to face tutoring. We are also focusing on improving the reading and writing skills of all of young people in addition to making sure that numeracy and practical skills are also addressed, refreshed and improved upon. All schools nationally are having the same challenges and responding in a similar way.

We had hoped to re-introduce face to face Parents Evenings this term but the recent increase in different variants of Covid have meant that we are having to continue remotely. Year 10 Parents Evening will be on Thursday 20th January and as with Year 11 last week this too shall be conducted remotely. Future Parents Evenings and other planned gatherings will be kept under review as the situation changes.

However, I must stress that in so many ways school life has returned to normal (pre-pandemic) and we no longer have 'bubbles', separate entrances, break or lunch times. All pupils and staff can move freely around the school site but all we ask currently is that all wear a face covering.

In the past few days we have celebrated the Christmas season by having a party for each of the year groups, organised by their Progress Leader and with the minimum of disruption. This has been some way to focus on all the positive developments that have taken place and to reward pupils for their positive approach in returning to full time studies in school.

Once again, we have also been the recipients of a very generous community who have provided hampers, gifts and other donations to many of our families. Everton in the Community, Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service, in addition to Sefton Community Pantry and Optimum Group Services are just some of the organisations to mention who have supported a Sefton-wide appeal for contributions towards this good cause and we are extremely grateful for their kindness and generosity of spirit.

On a more practical level we are trying to support pre-pandemic levels of attendance and punctuality. Can I please remind you that school starts at 8.30am and ask that you encourage your child to be in school on time. Similarly, we also have a 'no mobile phone' policy whereby we ask that all pupils and staff keep phones in their pockets and switched off. Phones will be confiscated until the end of the school day if found to be in use during lesson times.

Can I also encourage you to use Class Charts to follow the progress of your child. If you need support setting up your account then please contact I.T. Department at school.

I know that this is often a very difficult time for so many of us and I do want you to know that we are always here to support you as best we can, whether it is a friendly voice on the end of the phone, support for some other aspect of school life or even for more practical reasons. Please do not hesitate to contact the school if you feel we can help in any way.

Finally, there are a number of people I would like to say thank you to, especially for the support they have provided in this most challenging of years. Not least are the staff who work behind the scenes to ensure the school runs smoothly each and every day, our caretakers, cleaners and catering staff who do an outstanding job in keeping the school clean and feeding us all. Our support workers in the offices around the school who provide backroom support to keep the school running efficiently. Our teaching assistants, technicians and teachers who constantly want the best for your children. The Salesian Community and especially those at St James not just for their prayers and spiritual guidance but also for the time and effort, behind the scenes, that they constantly provide. Last but not least are our girls and boys and their parents and carers who have continued to work in partnership with us to make the school a happy and safe place to learn and to grow.

A reminder that on **Wednesday 5th January** pupils will be attending school for an on-site lateral flow test. Please note that **ONLY** pupils who are to be tested should come into school on this day where testing will take place between 8.30am and 12.30pm. As parents/carers you should complete the consent form [HERE](#) (if you have not already done so). Once pupils have had their lateral flow test result they will return home ready to start the new Spring Term on **Thursday 6th January at 8.30am**.

On behalf of all the Governors, staff and Salesian Trustees we wish you all a very happy, and safe, Christmas and a healthy, peaceful New Year.

Yours faithfully

Mr T Costello
Headteacher

Spring Term Dates:

Half term – School closes Friday 11th February and re-opens Monday 21st February
Easter break – School closes Friday 1st April and re-opens Wednesday 20th April