



In all things faithful

8th January 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

General Update

Further to my letter on the 3rd January, I write to give you an update of the plans going forward. As you are aware there are many national changes and things can change at very short notice. I ask that you bear this in mind if I have to make changes to any of the following.

Communication with Pupils

During this lockdown period it is crucial that your child does not feel alone or isolated. As such, there will be opportunities for pupils to engage with the school, as well as through engaging through remote learning.

Here is an outline of scheduled events that I would ask your child to attend.

- There will be 3 occasions each week when pupils must log on ready for a prompt 9am start
- Two of those will be to engage with their Form Tutor and once will be an assembly with the Head of Year
- The expectation is that pupils attend these and keep in social contact with their teachers and the school
- See below for an outline for each Year group.

Year group	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
7	Form time		Form time		Assembly
8	Form time			Assembly	Form time
9	Form time		Assembly		Form time
10	Form time	Assembly		PSHE time	
11	Assembly		Form time		PSHE time

In addition to this, there will be phone calls home as and when needed by other members of staff, for example Senior Leaders or Student Support Officers.

Remote Learning Plans and Expectations from Wednesday 6th January

All pupils in all years should now be accessing work online. This will include a range of forms including uploading work to complete on TEAMS or could be live lessons. Whatever the method of delivery, it is crucial that your child is engaging. Again, I can't emphasise the importance of remote learning on the educational progress and indeed, general well-being of your child. At some point in the future, pupils will have to return to school and the more they have learnt at home, the better the progress they will make, the easier it will be for them to return to the classroom.

The expectation for all pupils is clear and simple to follow.

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St. Damian's RC Science College

- Engage with all forms of remote learning to the best of their ability
- Follow their timetable ensuring that they follow the correct week and start time
- Be online ready to start the lesson punctually
- Respond to any questions from the teacher
- Complete the work set by the teachers, whether that is homework or classwork

As a school we register those pupils who are not online engaging in their learning.

If you or your child is not sure how to use Microsoft TEAMS, there are a series of simple tutorials available on our website: <https://www.stdamians.co.uk/online-school>

Any issues regarding passwords or accessing online lessons can be resolved by following the guidance outlined on this platform.

Mass Testing of Pupils

In line with DfE guidance we will soon be in a position to deliver rapid lateral flow testing in school. Being able to identify and contain any asymptomatic cases will help school to control infection unknowingly being spread. Testing will be voluntary, and no child or young person will be tested unless informed consent has been given by the appropriate person. Details will soon follow in a separate letter.

Year 11 Exams

As an illustration of how the national picture is rapidly changing, I can now confirm that exams will, sadly, not take place in the summer. Simply writing to tell you and your children that fact is very difficult for me. At present I have no further details to report suffice to say that Ofqual and the DfE are working on a plan to ensure a fair process for children nationally.

However, the following are points that you must know and understand so that there are no issues over the next few months or on Exams Results day. Most importantly, your child **MUST** continue to engage in remote learning. Below are some fundamental reasons for this and these need to be shared with your children. These may be 'blunt', but it is the reality of the situation.

- Firstly, if there are no exams there will be a large input from your teacher in determining their results. The teachers will base their judgement on work at home, ongoing assessment, attitudes to learning and obviously engagement in remote learning in the next few months
- Secondly, if your child does not engage in learning and has no structure then it may impact negatively on their mental well-being
- Thirdly, this is an excellent opportunity for pupils to improve upon their Mock exam results if needed. Again, this can't be demonstrated unless they engage in the on-line learning and communicate with their teachers
- And finally, please consider the difficulty your child would have in September when they start College if they 'disengage' before they should at the end of the summer term. In essence they will not have sufficient knowledge and understanding to start Level 3 courses

I really do understand that this situation is not ideal. The impact on all our pupils is massive but I must be absolutely clear that not engaging in lessons/learning, not logging into Form Time activities and assemblies will have a detrimental impact on your child's future.

Safeguarding Update

As we enter another national lockdown it is essential that you know where your child is at all times. Children should be at home and only leaving the house to exercise, attend medical appointments or participate in communal worship. During school hours your child should be engaged with the remote learning. However, please ensure your child is safe online. Here is a great web site for your perusal.

www.childrenssociety.org.uk/what-we-do/our-work/preventing-child-sexual-exploitation/staying-safe-online.

Additionally, children can feel very isolated during lockdown and this can impact on their wellbeing. As a parent, make time to talk to your child and listen to how they are feeling. If needed to support your child, use the following resources to help you support your child: www.mind.org.uk and www.penninecare.nhs.uk/wellbeing/wellbeing-packs-and-activities

Some upcoming dates for your diary

- **Year 9 Exam Week** w/c 18th January is cancelled. However, **Formal Assessments will still take place** via remote learning Mon 18th Jan - Wed 20th Jan. Pupils should prepare for formal assessments as advised by their teachers. A letter will be sent separately to Year 9 parents and further subject information will be posted on Teams at the end of this week.
- **Year 10 Parents' Evening.** Parents will receive a phone call w/c 11th Jan - 15th Jan from either their child's form tutor or senior staff to update them on the progress of their child, remote learning and check on their well-being.

Again, this isn't ideal, but I hope that you understand the unprecedented situation we are facing.

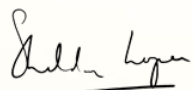
Some better news to share...

- **Congratulations** to Michelle Mafa, a pupil in Year 9 who entered the competition for all schools in the North West region called 'The 12 Days of Higher Education' run by GM Higher, the Consortium of Universities in Greater Manchester. Alongside our winner in Year 10, we are delighted to have a second St. Damian's winner, this time in Y9. Well done Michelle!
- A massive **£2,580** was raised before Christmas for the local food bank which helped our local community. In fact, it helped some of our own families at St Damian's. At a time when there is an extra pressure on finances, this amount reflects the generosity of the St Damian's community. Thank you!
- **Pupil Engagement** this week has been really positive. I hope that this continues as we progress through this lockdown. I will repeat again that engagement in the remote learning and live lessons is expected and as a school we track who is not working.
- There were 2 Year 11 external exams in school this week and it was fabulous to see pupils had obviously prepared themselves well. Both Mrs D'Rozario and Miss Williams were **extremely proud of how the pupils conducted themselves** in relation to the recent Government announcements; they were focussed and determined to do well which shows that they still have their St Damian's spirit! Well done, I am sure you will be rewarded for your efforts.

And finally, it has been a really busy week for the school, its staff and its pupils. St Damian's is always best when we are united in the face of adversity. This ongoing scenario is another challenge that we will face together, but like previous challenges we will come out the other side much stronger.

God bless and take care!

Yours sincerely



Mr Logue
Headteacher