



In all things faithful

**St Damian's RC Science College**

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**Headteacher**

Mr S Logue BA (Hons), M.Ed., NPQH

20<sup>th</sup> April 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope that you and your children enjoyed the Easter break despite the strange and challenging times that we are currently experiencing. The following letter contains some important updates and information for your perusal.

**Easter Opening**

Firstly, we opened up every day over Easter for the children of key workers and vulnerable children. Although the uptake was low, we are proud that we contributed in some way to help those on the front-line so to speak. When I asked for staff volunteers to help, I was overwhelmed with the response. This doesn't come as any surprise to me as it simply reflects the love that the staff here have for your great children.

**Opening between now and the half term holiday at the end of May**

School will be open at the normal times for those pupils who are vulnerable or the children of key workers. Pupils will continue to be well cared for and looked after. Sadly, I don't know at present how long this will continue for, but the current restrictions have been extended by at least 3 weeks.

**Expectation of our Pupils**

The expectation is that all pupils should be working from home as of today as it is officially the end of the Easter break. To this end, regular setting of work will begin again today. As like last half term, pupils should follow their Week 2 timetable and get themselves back into the routine of planning a structured day. Teachers are doing their best to ensure that the new learning is accessible and will follow up areas of difficulty when pupils are back in school. Pupils are encouraged to embrace the new challenges but must be reassured that they will be well supported on their return with any work that they were not confident with.

Furthermore, I am aware that this situation may bring increased anxiety to many pupils and parents. As with everything at the moment, the key word is balance. This is a difficult and uncertain time for us all and we must be mindful of the wellbeing of your children whilst still ensuring they are getting an adequate quality of education to ensure they are equipped for the academic challenges that lie ahead.

I ask parents to support the school in ensuring that your child is doing the work set. Note that it is not expected that parents are to be 'home schooling'. However, encouraging your child to read for pleasure will be of great benefit to your child's education longer term. I quote Dr Seuss, the famous American author: "*The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go*".

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## Reminder about on-line safety

Many activities set for pupils involves them accessing the internet for research purposes. Hence, it is more important than ever parents and carers monitor their child's activities on the internet.

A useful website to stay safe online is <https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/>. This website also has a dedicated page to keeping children happy and safe online during Covid19. I ask that parents read this website.

<https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/blog/keeping-children-happy-and-safe-online-during-covid-19>.

Another informative website is <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/>

Please be vigilant at all times when your child is on the internet but be confident in having open conversations about what they are doing online and if you have any serious online safeguarding concerns report them to <https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/>

## Following the National Advice

In these challenging times it is vital that your child continues to follow the advice of Public Health England. The key message that is simple to understand is **Stay at home, protect the NHS & save lives**. Furthermore, social distancing and washing hands are another 2 key aspects of the advice. If we all follow the advice, the expectation is that this lock-down will be lifted sooner and we all get back to school.

## Year 11 Update

Following on from the letter I sent regarding GCSE Grading, I just want to reiterate a few points. See below.

- Teachers will Grade your child based on the simple premise of **'what your child is most likely to get if they had sat the exams in the summer'**
- Teachers will then **rank these grades**, initially at classroom level, then at whole school level for each subject
- These grades will then be subject to a **robust Quality Assurance** process by both Subject Leaders and Senior Leaders to ensure fairness and consistency

Can I ask that parents of pupils do not ask teachers about the grades as teachers understand that they are not allowed to share this information. This is national guidance and please respect this instruction.

**Thursday 20th August 2020** has been confirmed as the GCSE results day. We will advise nearer the time how the results will be distributed to pupils.

To help prepare for progression to Sixth Form College, Yr.11 pupils may be interested in Gresham College's free online lectures at the following web site: [www.gresham.ac.uk/watch/](http://www.gresham.ac.uk/watch/). It is a useful resource for those wanting an academic challenge in preparation for September and beyond. The lectures are usually 45 minutes to an hour long, and range across the arts and sciences.

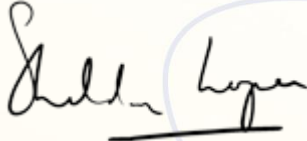
## Options

Thank you for all the information returned by parents and pupils for Yr.9 Options. Mrs Henshaw is currently in the process of looking at the organisation of the curriculum and timetable as well as pupil groupings, following the choices made. Parents/Carers will be contacted if a certain subject is problematic and there is a need to look at reserve choices. The intention is to send a letter of confirmation of final GCSE and vocational choices in the middle of May.

Finally, it is with great sadness that I report that a member of the St Damian's community, Mr Mason, a foster carer for a pupil in Year 9, has tragically lost his life to the Covid-19 virus. I ask that you remember him and his family in your prayers at this difficult time.

Thank you for your continued support. It has been lovely to read the messages of support that have been emailed in recent weeks. Where we do come up against some challenges, we will continue to work with parents and carers to resolve.

Yours faithfully



Mr Logue  
Headteacher