



25<sup>th</sup> March 2020

In all things faithful

**St Damian's RC Science College**

Lees Road  
Ashton-under-Lyne  
OL6 8BH

**Tel:** 0161 330 5974

**Fax:** 0161 331 4744

**Email:** [admin@stdamians.co.uk](mailto:admin@stdamians.co.uk)

**Web:** <http://www.stdamians.co.uk/>

**Follow us on Twitter:** @StDamiansRCSC

**Find us on Facebook**

**Headteacher**

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

Dear parents/carers

The following is a brief update.

### **Conduct of pupils in school and a brief message to the parents of these key workers**

Firstly, can I say that the few pupils that are in school during this time of National Emergency are a credit to St Damian's and their families. Their conduct in school has been impeccable. I hope that their attendance in school, where they are cared for, brings some relief for their parents, who are on the front-line. I would like to, on behalf of the St Damian's community, use this opportunity to say 'thanks' for all the work that key workers are undertaking to ensure the safety of us all.

It is times like these that make me so proud to be the Headteacher at St Damian's.

### **Conduct of many of the pupils working from home**

Likewise, I am reading very positive messages from my staff about the work that many pupils are doing at home. Year 10 pupils can 'chat' to their teachers online and they appreciate the ongoing dialogue. Many pupils, in true St Damian's style are saying 'thanks'. This simple word means a lot. In other year groups there is evidence that many/most pupils are embracing this temporary way of working.

### **Support from parents**

I am being inundated with really positive messages from many parents. I am receiving these daily and they are extremely positive and up-lifting. I appreciate these and when the time is right, I will share these with staff. I know that you appreciate that we are dealing with circumstances that are rapidly changing.

### **Staying at home**

A Government minister said at the weekend that this is '**not a game**'. It is not safe for pupils to be out and congregating in groups. The message is to 'stay at home'. I can't emphasize this point enough. I ask that parents, for your child's safety, do not let your child out but insist they **stay at home**. This is also to protect the NHS and its workers who are working under extreme pressure to ensure the safety of us all. In essence, if your child goes out it increases the risks and this inevitably puts a strain on NHS staff. Please listen to this advice. It's clear: **Stay at home, protect the NHS and save lives.**

### **Remote learning**

Almost overnight 'remote' or on-line learning has been implemented for the sole purpose of supporting our children. This is a 'new' concept at St Damian's, as it is for many secondary schools. We believe that building positive relationships based on mutual respect is the key ingredient in great teaching. This can't be done effectively 'on-line'. However, remote learning supports parents in creating a structure to the school day as best we can. Obviously if a child is unwell or needs a 'reduced' working day for whatever reason, parents will have to make those decisions for their child to ensure their well-being.

Microsoft Teams: This is a new system introduced last week. As time progresses, this system will settle as we all gain a better understanding of the system. It is worth noting that our IT department has been literally working day and night to implement the system. We are aware that there are a small number of 'bugs' in the system e.g. school can see the work on Microsoft Teams, most pupils within a teaching group

St. Damian's RC Science College

can access it and then one individual pupil does not have access. This does not mean that the work is not there, it means that there is a technical issue on that specific pupil's account. We are working to resolve these issues as they arise. We ask for your patience and understanding.

Access to ICT at Home: We are aware some pupils will have limited access at home and flexibility is needed around parents working from home. Pupils may access Microsoft Teams on mobile phones and may complete their work around times that parents have to work.

Understanding of the Work: Remote Learning will introduce pupils to new material. Usually teachers explain this material and respond to questions posed in a classroom. With remote learning, this is not possible. Pupils will **not** be penalised if they do not understand some of the work. Re-assure your child that if they are having difficulty they will be able to get help when back in school. Year 10 pupils may use the 'chat' facility to communicate directly with their teachers. It is important to state that there are numerous web sites out there where pupils of all year groups can access further explanations e.g. BBC Bitesize, MyMaths, Pearson Active Learn. Furthermore, reading books that are age appropriate are an excellent educational experience. Pupils should aim to engage in reading for at least 20-30 minutes a day. Pupils should aim to engage in reading for at least 20-30 minutes a day.

Technical Issues at Home: Firstly, please use the help sheet provided on the school website/School Closure Learning Resources. If the problem is unresolved, email [pupilproblem@stdamians.co.uk](mailto:pupilproblem@stdamians.co.uk) and wait patiently for a response. We have successfully responded to over 200 queries. We are unable to resolve problems instantly due to the volume of queries. Some problems are more complex than others and take longer to resolve. A number of the more straightforward issues have been where pupils have not followed the specific steps on the help sheet. We respectfully ask, that you use the email address provided: [pupilproblem@stdamians.co.uk](mailto:pupilproblem@stdamians.co.uk) to raise technical issues, rather than social media. That way it can be coordinated.

#### **St Damian's and Social Media**

Sadly, I, politely ask that where parents use St Damian's social media, for example Facebook, that you do so in a manner that is reflective of our core values, most notably be respectful.

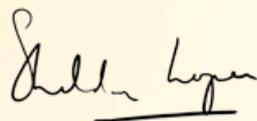
I have read a post where parents are using inappropriate language. This is read by pupils and parents alike. This bad language is not reflective of our Community. Therefore, I ask that parents refrain from using any kind of poor language on our platforms. It is not conducive to working together at this time [Nor indeed, at any time]. Other parents have contacted me to say that this is unacceptable.

I have read a comment that says that St Damian's' is not setting work for my child as they are low ability. Let me be clear here. This sentiment is simply not true. All the work that is being set is being set by the class teacher who will set the work according to ability, what needs to be done and to build upon previous learning.

Having said that, 99% of the comments we are getting are positive. As Headteacher, I ask that all public comments are positive as that is the right thing to do.

Finally, stay safe and follow the guidance which is updated daily. May God bless you and your families.

Mr Logue



Headteacher