



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

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

Follow us on Twitter: @StDamiansRCSC

Find us on Facebook

Headteacher

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

20th March 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

School next week: Closures, 'Key workers' and vulnerable children

Although the school is 'shut' from today, Friday 20th March, it will be open for children of key workers and vulnerable children. In the letter I sent yesterday I outlined that if this applied to you, would you please e-mail keyworker@stdamians.co.uk and further instructions will follow. This e-mail address is **ONLY** for parents who believe that their child meets the criteria. All other queries should follow the normal procedures.

I await further announcements today.

However, it is important to note that

- Many of my staff, both teachers and support staff will not be in school
- Pupils will not be following the curriculum as it is now
- There may be mixed classes in terms of year groups

Furthermore, it is important that St Damian's remains a safe place for pupils and staff. National guidance says that *"the fewer children making the journey to school, and the fewer children in educational settings, the lower the risk that the virus can spread and infect vulnerable individuals in wider society"*. In essence, this means the school will remain open only for those **children who absolutely need to attend**.

This advice is subject to change as more announcements are imminent.

Year 11

On Thursday, there was an assembly for our Year 11 pupils. I, on behalf of their teachers, wanted to say that this was not the happy ending that we had planned for. It was a sad moment for them and the staff at the school who have loved and cared for them over the past five years. Tears were plentiful from both the pupils and my staff, teachers and support staff alike. Mrs Battaglia, their Head of Year had many pupils and staff in tears with her impromptu speech!

However, I was extremely impressed with their dignity, understanding and their mature approach to the news that they will not be sitting their GCSEs this summer. In spite of uncertainty and difficult times, their attitude and conduct were impeccable. The values we instil at St Damian's really shone through the pupils yesterday. I hope that they get their post 16 progression route and St Damian's will do everything in our power to ensure that they enrol on the courses that they deserve.

General update

Mental Health: Over the past few years, Mental Health has been a growing concern. During this worldwide crisis, the mental health and wellbeing of young people [and indeed adults] will be

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challenged. Please encourage your child to utilise the apps and links on the school website and social media platforms.

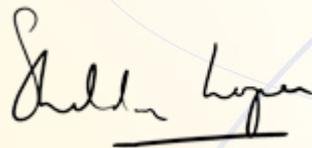
Remote Learning: All year groups now have access to remote learning via Microsoft Teams. Pupils need to login to the school website using their username and password and follow their usual school timetable at home. This facility ensures that pupils can continue to make progress in their learning. Further information is available on the school web-site/School Closure Work Resource and in the letter to parents/carers on Remote Learning.

Y9 Options: The deadline for Y9 Options will still be Monday 30th March 2020. Revised guidance on the return of options forms is in the Y9 Options letter on the school website.

My staff

Can I take this opportunity again to state that the pressure on my staff has been both immense and unprecedented. Like you, many of them have young children and a wider family network. This means that they also have increased anxieties at this time. As I have said in previous letters over the past few days, the work that they have done over the past few days has been incredible. Please remember this if contacting the school.

Finally, these are challenging times for us all. My prayers are with all the children. God bless and take care.



Mr Logue
Headteacher