



In all things faithful

**St Damian's RC Science College**

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**Headteacher**

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Date: 30<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Dear parents/carers

As the school continues to be partially closed, the following are some updates for your perusal.

**Update on remote learning**

Over the past week, many queries have been received with regards to Microsoft Teams, our remote learning platform. As a school, we are quickly learning with regards to remote learning. Staff are continuing to work really diligently behind the scenes to ensure that work is uploaded and is of the quality expected. However, we don't always 'get it right'. But I ask for your patience: this is 'new' to St Damian's and mistakes are expected.

Some updates outlined below

- We do not have the capacity [nor is there an expectation to do so] for staff to 'deliver' live lessons nor mark work. At present staff are focusing on ensuring that there is sufficient high-quality work and resources being uploaded on a daily basis. This takes time. Resources are having to be created from new or existing resources are having to be adapted to ensure that they are accessible for pupils doing online learning
- Teachers of Year 10 pupils are responding to pupil queries. This is a complex and time-consuming activity. I have to note here that my staff would prefer to be in school, interacting and teaching your children face to face
- Whilst it is important that pupils complete their work, it is very difficult for teachers to recognise and acknowledge this. I ask that you, as parents, continue to encourage your child to work through the tasks set and take pride in their work. It will not be in vain
- Finally, a **very** small number of pupils have not accessed any remote learning. This also includes a few pupils in Year 10 who will be sitting their GCSEs next year. It is vital that parents, especially those parents of pupils in Year 10, monitor and encourage Year 10 pupils to complete their work.

Additionally, Mrs Henshaw will be uploading some subject specific web sites and a general update on remote learning this week.

**Easter break**

From this Friday, 3<sup>rd</sup> April, it is officially the school holidays. However, St Damian's will continue to be open for children of key workers and vulnerable children during this period. However, staff are not directed to respond to Year 10 queries during this time.

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This is a time for pupils to take a rest, read a good book and maybe become involved in the many well-being activities that are being promoted to ensure their general well-being and personal development. Below are some links that you may find useful.

<https://www.actionforhappiness.org/active-april> [Link to mindfulness]

<http://www.kidsmathgamesonline.com/sudoku.html> [Link to sudoku]

<https://thewordsearch.com/printable/> [Link to word searches]

Below are some websites for Holy Week

<https://cafod.org.uk/Pray/Prayer-resources/Holy-week-prayers> [

<https://www.loyolapress.com/our-catholic-faith/liturgical-year/holy-week>

<https://mycatholic.life/books/catholic-daily-reflections-series/lent-and-easter-reflections/>

This is also an opportunity to participate in new activities. Below are examples of this.

Joe Wicks- PE. Joe Wicks live PE lessons at 9am every day on You-tube

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCAxW1XT0iEJo0TYIRfn6rYQ>

Bear Grylls – The Great Indoor Activities. Bear has teamed up with Scouts to provide 100 indoor activities such as origami and making hot air balloons on a weekly live feed.

<https://www.scouts.org.uk/the-great-indoors/>

David Walliams- Storytime. David Walliams is providing free daily audio stories through his website at 11am.

<https://www.worldofdavidwalliams.com/>

Myleene Klass- Music. Children can participate with live music sessions with items from around the house and learn about music.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQh2wgJ5tOrixYBn6jFXsXQ>

Oti Mabuse- Dance Classes. Free online dance classes from the judge of Strictly Come Dancing

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VqwXciMDFYA>

Jamie Oliver- Cooking Classes. Jamie Oliver is back on Channel 4 with 'Keep Cooking and Carry On' broadcast every week night at 5.30pm

### Using the internet and safety

Can I emphasise how important it is that you, as a parent, ensure that when your children are working online that they are safe. Concerns have been expressed about a possible rise in online grooming. You should have appropriate safety measures in place including appropriate parental controls. Additionally, mature conversations should be taken place to raise awareness of online dangers which are real. As a parent myself, the best possible advice is that I could impart is that *'it could happen to YOUR child'*. Ask your child to work on the computer in a family area, rather than in their bedroom.

### Stay at home

As we approach 'good' weather it is tempting to let pupils out. However, the advice is still stay at home. As said previously, this is to protect the NHS and its workers. In simple terms, 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.**

#### Year 11 update regarding GCSE exams

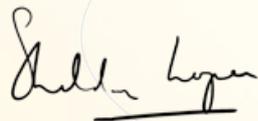
I understand and appreciate the added anxiety from your children regarding their GCSE exams. I do not know any more information other than what is on the link below.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/further-update-on-2020-exams>

When I do have more information, I will share it as soon as reasonably possible. I am hoping for some clarification from the DfE/Ofqual in the coming weeks. However, it is reassuring that current press releases state that pupils are not *'disadvantaged by these unprecedented circumstances'*. As Headteacher, I have to believe in this as I know that the vast majority of Year 11 pupils were working extremely hard to achieve well, and collectively, ensure that St Damian's outcomes were again above National Averages in all indicators.

Take care and remember all the key workers, especially those on the front line in your prayers.

Mr Logue



Headteacher