



St Mary's Catholic School

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where everyone can succeed



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11th September 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

At the end of our first week, I wanted to let you know what an excellent start your children have made to the new school term. It has been an extremely smooth start, all the more remarkable given that students have been away from school for such an extensive period of time. Students have been extremely cooperative and attentive as we have taken them through all of the new health and safety routines. There has been a lot for them to absorb and they have settled back into school very well. It has been an absolute delight to have all of the students and staff back together in school and I hope that the students have enjoyed their first few days of the new school term.

As you know, we have implemented many new routines in school to make certain that robust protective measures are in place to ensure the health and safety of all members of the school community and to manage any potential risks effectively. As I mentioned in my previous letter to you, we will continue to regularly review and evaluate all of our new systems and routines, to ensure they are implemented as effectively as possible.

As part of this ongoing review, there are a couple of areas that we must adapt from Monday next week, to continue to ensure the health and safety of our students and staff. Therefore, I would be most grateful if you could read the following information carefully.

No Access to the Car Park from 2.45pm to 3.30pm

I am afraid that from **Monday, 14th September**, there will be no access in or out of the school car park for parents between **2.45pm and 3.30pm**. The exceptions are, of course, parents who need to pick up disabled children or children with temporary mobility difficulties. As I mentioned in my previous letter, we predicted that this area would need monitoring closely, given it was likely that many more parents would bring their children to school by car, to avoid using public transport at this time. We have therefore monitored the car park very closely this week and, unfortunately, the number of cars arriving and leaving during this busy time, risks compromising the safe departure of the children. The high number of cars arriving and leaving the car park at the end of the school day has also gridlocked the car park and caused further tailbacks of vehicles on Benton Park Road and this too compromises the health and safety of our students and staff, given that should there be an emergency situation, an emergency vehicle would not be able to access the site with the current volume of traffic. Therefore, it is our duty to address this.

The traffic has been much more staggered in the car park before school and therefore, whilst we will continue to monitor this very closely to decide if access to the car park before school also needs to be limited, at this time we will continue to allow parental access before school to the car park.

In terms of the end of school day when access will not be possible, can I suggest that if you are collecting your child from school, you find a safe spot somewhere off Benton Park Road and your child can walk to this point to meet you. One sensible suggestion put forward is to use the area or car park near Lidl supermarket. There is also a pedestrian crossing onto the school side of the road at that part of Benton Park Road, ensuring that students can safely walk to meet you. Please note that it is not possible to park on much of Benton Park Road itself, given that the road is a main highway and also has permit only parking restrictions. Please also avoid parking on pavements or blocking the school entrance, again, so as not to compromise health and safety in any way.

Students to wear facemasks on the school pathways to and from Benton Park Road

As you know, having carefully considered the latest guidance and the layout of our school building, we decided that face masks would be worn by students and staff in communal indoor spaces such as corridors, where social distancing may not be possible.

This new routine has been embedded very successfully and students have shown great maturity and much cooperation in adapting swiftly to this new routine. Following further review of all areas of health and safety this week, we will also now be asking students to wear their face masks when they enter the school site from Benton Park Road and walk up the pathway to their year group bubble yard or 'wet weather' indoor space. Once they reach their year group bubble meeting point, they will be able to remove their mask. Students will also be asked to wear their face mask as they walk down the pathways to leave the school site at the end of the school day. Once they reach Benton Park Road, if they wish to do so, they will be able to remove their mask. This small change is being introduced as, despite the gradual arrival of students at the start of the school day and our staggered end times at the end of the day, given the large numbers of students in our school community, there are still many students arriving and leaving the school at these times and it may not always be possible for students to remain socially distanced as they walk up and down the school pathways from Benton Park Road. Therefore, we feel that wearing facemasks for this short walk, will further support the health and safety of our students.

No parental pedestrian access onto the school site at the start and end of the school day

As outlined above, we must ensure that students can move safely along the pathways to and from Benton Park Road and are also able to maintain social distancing as much as possible. Therefore, we would ask that from Monday, 14th September, parents do not walk along these pathways or onto the school site to drop off or pick up their children at the start or end of the school day. Instead, we would also ask parents to stay on Benton Park Road when dropping off or collecting their children on foot. Again, this will help to reduce the numbers of people on these pathways to support social distancing and to keep students and supervising duty staff safe.

Students with any COVID symptoms

Finally, as per my previous letter, I would like to remind parents that students with any COVID symptoms should not come into school (i.e. a high temperature, a new continuous cough, a loss or change to their sense of smell or taste). It is vitally important that all parents adhere to this, to protect the health and well-being of all members of the school community. Similarly, if a member of a student's family or someone they have recently been in close contact with has COVID symptoms, the student also should not come into school. Please inform your child's Head of Year immediately if he/she or a family member has COVID symptoms. We would then ask you to book your child a COVID test as soon as possible. The results are usually received in less than 48 hours. If the test for your child is negative *and* they no longer have any symptoms, you should let the Head of Year know and your child will then be able to return to school. Should the test be positive, of course your child should remain at home and you should follow the 'Stay at Home Guidance' for households on the Gov.UK website.

Your cooperation with all of the above is greatly appreciated.

Many thanks for your continued support.

Yours faithfully,



Miss Patterson
Headteacher