



E-Briefing for Parents and Carers

Friday 22nd May

Dear Parents and Carers

As always, I hope this letter finds you and your family in good health and good spirits.

I write to provide an update regarding possible school re-opening following my letter written on the 12th May. Following the Government's recent decision that primary schools may possibly open from June 1st at the earliest, there have been many different and varied approaches and timescales undertaken by Local Authorities, Multi-Academy Trusts and individual schools across our locality and indeed the country. The overall direction of travel has been outlined by government but the situation is very much still evolving.

For secondary schools, we have been informed that Years 7 to 9 will not return to school before September and that years 10 and 12 may be afforded the opportunity for some 'face to face' sessions with teaching staff. We still await further guidance from the Department for Education regarding the exact nature of these sessions, and once received we will then be in a position to undertake next step planning. **I can therefore inform you that school will not be open for Year 10 and 12 students from Monday 1st June.** We will only be open for the continued provision offered to the children of key workers and vulnerable children. We look forward to the day when St Nicholas can once again be filled again with students enjoying learning and the company of their classmates. It is clear however, that we must go step by step and above all, ensure that we are keeping everyone safe.

Can I offer once again, my thanks for your positive feedback on all that the teaching staff are currently doing to support your children at home. Following these recent announcements, the school has been making provision to review our existing online provision and we are currently exploring how we can further strengthen our home-learning materials. We have discussed this with Subject Leaders and we will look to update you after the half-term break.



Covid-19 has brought uncertainty for us all and we need to ensure that any return to school is safe for your children's physical and emotional well-being. Our priority is that we must make sure that any way forward is safe for everyone within our community, and the Department for Education is providing ongoing guidance to support necessary risk assessments for us to consider. When the decision is made to open our school again, we will have in place a robust risk assessment and will have put in place all necessary changes to policy, practice and our physical environment with clear briefings and communication for staff, parents and students.

Maintaining the safety of everyone at St Nicholas will remain our overwhelming priority as we consider the possible educational benefits of inviting some students and staff to return to the classroom before the end of the academic year. What is important to note, even at this early stage, is that the impact of social distancing measures upon the implementation of a school day will make it impossible to deliver a normal timetable or lesson structure. Therefore we must be absolutely clear that any plans to invite students back to school are rooted in achieving some educational benefit that cannot be achieved by any other means.

I want nothing more than to welcome your children back to St Nicholas with open arms, but we are all in unprecedented times and welcoming them back safely must be our priority. I thank you for your patience as we continue to consider all possibilities at this moment in time.

Finally, if you have not already been contacted by a member of the Pastoral Team then your child's Form Teacher will be contacting you by phone during the two weeks following half-term. The purpose of the call is for the Form Teacher to see how your child is and provide encouragement and support. Please note that the number may well show as 'withheld'.

I have included additional items for our weekly briefing below and I wish you all a happy and healthy half-term.

Richard Woods
Headteacher



Prayers & Reflections

The past Sunday gospels have been about Jesus speaking to his friends about what will happen when he returns to Heaven. Yesterday we celebrated the Feast of the Ascension when Jesus did leave his friends to return to the Father. Links to recent events saw the comment that 'Jesus is now working from home'. But this in Jesus' home as well. Jesus is true God and true Man so his little house in Nazareth, his camping in the desert and his seat at the right hand of the Father are all places where he belongs. In John's repetitive way of framing this piece of scripture this is what Jesus is saying. That everything and everyone belongs to the Kingdom of God and that his friends, as fearful and as very human as they seem, are the ones who will keep the message going. Two thousand years later, here we are telling the same message of faith, hope and love.

**'In the world you will have trouble,
But be brave: I have conquered the world.'**

John 16 :33

Student Planner Competition

Following feedback from School Council prior to school closure, we will have a new look Student Planner for the new academic year. We are looking for students to design the new front cover for the 2020-21 planner and Mrs Pardoe will be sending out further details to students via Ruler. Please encourage your children to take part and enter their designs.

Relationships, Sex, and Health Education Consultation

Thank you to everyone who contributed to our initial consultation earlier in the academic year. Our draft RSHE (Relationships, Sex, and Health Education) policy is now available to view on the school website. From September 2020 this becomes a statutory subject within all schools. We will be supporting our students, staff and parents by following the TenTen *Live Life to the Full* programme fully endorsed by the Catholic Education Service.

If you wish to make a comment or raise a question, please contact Mr Wallace by Monday 1st June at n.wallace@st-nicholas.cheshire.sch.uk



New Information for Parents and Carers from the Department for Education

This week the Department for Education has provided more guidance to help secondary school children continue their education at this moment in time. Topics include helping your child organise their time, mental health and wellbeing as well as hints and tips to secure a positive attitude to learning at home. Further details can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/help-secondary-school-children-continue-their-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

GCSE and A-Level Update

The government has provided further details for parents on arrangements for GCSE and A-Level examinations this summer which can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-cancellation-of-gcses-as-and-a-levels-in-2020/coronavirus-covid-19-cancellation-of-gcses-as-and-a-levels-in-2020>