



9th June 2020

Dear Parents, Carers and Students

Following an Extraordinary meeting of the Governing Board of St Nicholas Catholic High School today, the decision was made to implement a wider re-opening of our school from Monday 22nd June. We will adopt a staged approach to re-opening, with Year 12 students invited for face-to-face sessions from Monday 22nd June to Friday 26th June, and then Year 10 students from Monday 29th June through to Tuesday 7th July. Arrangements for future face-to-face sessions beyond these dates will be communicated in due course.

In reaching this decision the Governors scrutinised extensive documentation which included the following:

- St Nicholas' Covid-19 Risk Assessment*
- St Nicholas' Wider Reopening Plan*
- Guidance for secondary school provision from 15 June 2020 [Gov.co.uk, 20.5.20]
- Covid 19: implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings [Gov.co.uk, 1.6.20]
- Scientific advice and rationale for approach [Gov.co.uk, 25.05.20]
- Overview of scientific advice and information on coronavirus [DfE, 11.05.20]
- Details on phased wider opening of schools, colleges and nurseries [Gavin Williamson, Education Secretary, 11.05.20]
- Modelling and behavioural science responses to scenarios for relaxing school closures [SAGE's Interdisciplinary Task and Finish Group on the Role of Children in Transmission, 20.5.20]
- When should a school reopen? [The Independent SAGE Report, 28.05.20, p38]
- Which occupations have the highest potential exposure to the coronavirus (COVID-19)? [ONS, 11.05.20]

*These documents are available on our school website

Opening any school to more students involves an increased risk of infection. However, having considered all of the relevant advice, guidance and evidence, the Governors of St Nicholas are confident that our Covid-19 Risk Assessment and Reopening Plan demonstrate our ability to reduce that risk to acceptable and manageable levels. We have carefully followed Government guidance that sets out a hierarchy of controls which schools should work through and which, when implemented, create an inherently safer system where the risk of



transmission of infection is significantly reduced. These controls are:

- avoiding contact with anyone with symptoms
- frequent hand cleaning and good hygiene practices
- regular cleaning of settings
- minimising contact and mixing

In all correspondence to parents and carers over the past ten weeks I have been clear that my overriding priority is the safety and welfare of all members of our community - this will continue to be at the core of our strategic planning and revised operational processes during the wider-reopening of school.

It is important to understand that as we invite Year 12 and Year 10 students back into school for their face to face sessions, each and every member of our community, students, staff, parents and carers, have their own important part to play in reducing risk of infection to themselves and to others. It is vital that we all follow detailed social distancing measures, enhanced hygiene practices, alongside new arrival and departure procedures to ensure that the risk of transmission and infection is minimised. We have also reviewed our Behaviour Policy to include new Covid-19 regulations so we are all clear on what is now required by every member of the St Nicholas community.

If you are a parent or carer of a child in Year 12 or 10, you will now receive further information from Mr Heffernan, Deputy Headteacher, which outlines in detail the practical arrangements for our wider-school reopening for Year 12 and Year 10 students. Please take time to read these important pages with your child.

It is also important to note that as we begin the wider reopening of St Nicholas Catholic High School, we will look to support students with their academic studies, alongside extensive pastoral support focusing on mental health and wellbeing - St Nicholas has been one of five secondary schools across Cheshire West and Chester taking a lead on ensuring a Trauma Informed Approach to re-opening to avoid re-traumatisation and build resilience in our work with children and families as well as each other.

In conclusion, the Senior Leadership Team and Governors of St Nicholas will continue to monitor all national and local datasets, advice and guidance and we will look to respond and evaluate our position accordingly as matters progress.

We very much look forward to seeing Year 12 and Year 10 students again in the near future.

Yours sincerely

Richard Woods
Headteacher