



E-Briefing for Parents, Carers & Students

Friday 3rd July

Prayers & Reflections

Our Gospel reading this week is Matthew 11:25-30, within which Jesus says ‘Come to me, all of you who labour and are overburdened, and I will give you rest.’

Our school theme for the week is very appropriately ‘Supporting each other’ – something I am sure that we have all needed over the past weeks and continue to do as we move on towards the end of the school year.

Matthew’s Jesus now shows us the depth of his love for us. It is one of the traditions of faith that the word ‘Love’ is both a noun and a verb. We should always think of God as Love and express our faith as love in action.

We have seen so many examples of this over the past months with people putting others first – whether NHS staff, shop assistants, neighbours, voluntary workers or ourselves helping out more at home or with relatives - help has been offered to make other lives easier. It’s been a long commitment and it’s not always easy to do, so Jesus reassures us with the promise that he is there helping us in our efforts and doing the work alongside us.

*i will
give
you
rest*

-Matthew 11:28



Planning for September

Over the last two weeks, Government Ministers have made clear their ambitions for when the academic year begins once again in September. On 19th June Education Secretary Gavin Williamson, stated that *“The Government is signed up to bring every child back, in every year group, in every school”* and a week later on 26th June our Prime Minister stated that *“Primary and secondary education will recommence in September with full attendance.”*

Yesterday the Government set out official guidance for the full opening of schools in September. This guidance contained information for schools relating to Public health advice to minimise coronavirus risks, school operations, curriculum, behaviour, pastoral support, assessment, accountability and contingency planning for outbreaks. The Senior Leadership Team and Subject Leaders at St Nicholas had already begun strategic planning for September prior to these announcements, and I am pleased to confirm that our own initial preparations align with the Department for Education guidance and direction offered yesterday. Full details of the Government guidance can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>

There are many significant logistical and operational considerations that we now need to address to secure a safe return in September and in parallel, we have already begun our planning to ensure that students can engage fully with their academic studies and that their personal welfare and wellbeing remains a priority as we start the Advent term together.

To assist with our planning, we are asking all parents and carers to complete an online survey indicating anticipated travel arrangements in September. Please take the time to complete this survey by 10am Friday 10th July.

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=TQCEKBxgKE67QeEw_TRIHkjCFeh4dFnx5P6NOtxBZUMktEMUZPTVhHQkQ3QzBDVjFLNDVEUVpYVSQIQCN0PWcu

During school closure, there has been a national discussion and debate surrounding possible ‘lost learning’ and the impact upon the future progress of children when schools returned to ‘normal’ in September. We have continually monitored the level of student engagement with their home learning during the time St Nicholas has been closed to students, and our position reflects the national picture of variance both across and within year groups in relation to home learning engagement and completion of tasks set.

All students will return to school in September, and we will have in place our robust and detailed plans to secure the best possible start to the 2020-21 academic year for each and every child. We have planned for all students at St Nicholas to follow a series of ‘*Bridging Units*’ which will support their access to the curriculum for the year ahead. Each subject area will ensure that in every class in every year group from 8 to 13, students will re-visit essential subject knowledge, skills & concepts studied remotely during school closure that are



necessary for them to access the 2020/21 curriculum. These focused units of work will last between 3 to 6 weeks at start of the Advent Term, and individual departments will determine the length of time devoted to each Bridging Unit. Assessments will be completed either at end of each Bridging Unit or will be completed throughout the unit itself as determined by each department.

Once each Bridging Unit has been completed, students will then engage with the planned curriculum for the remainder of the academic year, which will have been re-aligned as required to ensure all necessary content is completed by the end of that year. The results of Bridging Unit assessments will be used to complete learning 'gap analysis', which will in turn inform retrieval sessions clearly identified throughout the rest of the year with spaced learning activities injected into re-aligned departmental curriculum plans.

For students beginning Year 11 and Year 13 in September we still wait to be informed of final examination arrangements. The Education Secretary has asked Ofqual to consult on possible amendments to GCSEs and A-Levels in 2021 and has stated that *"We are, therefore, planning on the basis that GCSEs and A levels will take place in summer 2021 but with adaptations."*

We eagerly await this final guidance from Ofqual and the Department for Education. Full details of the Ofqual consultation guidance can be found below, which contains a further link should you wish to respond to the consultation.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/proposed-changes-to-the-assessment-of-gcse-as-and-a-levels-in-2021>

I am sure that you will have many questions as the measures outlined by the Government yesterday are distilled and understood fully by parents, carers, students and schools. We will look to update you regularly as we have done throughout this pandemic, and if there are any questions that you wish us to consider at this initial stage please email me directly at head@st-nicholas.cheshire.sch.uk.

As with our earlier wider re-opening plan for Years 10 and 12, full and precise arrangements for September will be communicated as soon as practically possible, following discussions with the Local Authority, the Diocese of Shrewsbury and the Governing Board.

Thank you as always for your positive engagement, feedback and support as we navigate through these unprecedented times together.

Yours sincerely

Richard Woods
Headteacher