



16th July 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

I hope this letter finds you all well at the end of a very different and somewhat strange school year.

Today is the last day of term and ordinarily we would all be feeling the buzz of excitement that ripples across the school as we look forward to the summer holidays together. As I write these words today however, the corridors are silent, the classrooms are empty and I can hear only the faint footsteps of members of staff and the ticking of the clock in my office – very surreal!

Thank you for all you have done to support your child's positive engagement with home learning over the last few weeks. I know that some of you have felt there has been too much work set, and some of you have wanted your child to do a little more. Thank you for the emails and communication that you have offered to me personally as well as to your child's Year Leader, Form Tutor and class teachers – we appreciate all compliments and constructive feedback and have looked to respond appropriately as our progressive model continued throughout school closure.

As outlined in my most recent weekly briefings, when children return in September some things in school will be somewhat different to begin with. We have had to change some of our routines to make sure that we are all as safe as possible, and we have created year group 'bubbles' which have to remain separate as far as possible throughout the day. I have outlined some of these changes in earlier letters, and I have offered some more details as an appendix to this letter today. As previously stated, full details will be provided following a meeting of the Governing Board on the 24th August, but we hope that the preliminary information offered over the last few weeks by myself and your child's Year Leader assists with family preparations for September. I have also written a letter to all students today via their Ruler account which outlines some of the changes planned for their return in September and we will be making videos available prior to their return, so that they can re-orientate themselves before the new academic year begins.

Some things however, will remain exactly the same – there will still be the same high standards and expectations of all students at all times, the same requirements to wear school uniform correctly, the same 4Rs ensuring that we respect ourselves, each other, the school and we are always ready to learn, and the same belief that we can all achieve great things with our God at our side.



So please enjoy your summer holidays – enjoy the time with your family and your friends and the greater freedoms that we have been afforded as ‘lock-down’ eases. Some of your child’s teachers have put together messages for the summer and if you haven’t already seen the video then I have provided the link below – it also includes a fantastic version of Somewhere Over the Rainbow sung beautifully by our school choir when they visited the Netherlands last year.

<https://youtu.be/6qiMJWJYugA>

As detailed on the school website, the 2020 Advent Term will begin w/c 31st August, with a ‘staggered start’ for different year groups:

- Monday 31st August Bank Holiday
- Tuesday 1st September Staff Training Day1
- Wednesday 2nd September Staff Training Day2
- Thursday 3rd September School opens to Yr 7 and 12 students only
- Friday 4th September School opens to all students

As we enter into the summer holidays together, I offer a prayer for your families, your friends and your communities:

"If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast." [Psalm 139:9-10]

*God has not promised sun without rain,
Joy without sorrow, peace without pain.
But God has promised strength for the day,
Rest for the labour, light for the way,
Grace for the trials, help from above,
Unfailing compassion and undying love.*

Thank you as always, for the support you offer to the St Nicholas community. Have a wonderful summer and we look forward to seeing everyone again in September.

Richard Woods
Headteacher



Additional Information – September Arrangements

Structure of the School Day

School site will be open to students from 8.20am. On arrival students will be directed to go straight to their Form room as staff will be undertaking supervision from this time in the morning. Students will not be able to access the Dining Room, the yard or the Library in the morning.

The school day will begin as usual at 8.45am and lessons will remain the same length of one hour apart from lesson 5 which has been increased to 70 minutes. This is to facilitate a staggered departure and a socially distanced exit from school site and boarding of school buses. Year groups will be dismissed at the following times:

Year 7	3.00pm
Year 8	3.04pm
Year 9	3.08pm
Year 10	3.12pm
Year 11	3.15pm
6 th Form	3.15pm

There will be on extra-curricular or enrichment activities after school for the first 3 weeks of term.

Movement around School Site

Government guidance to schools states that *“When timetabling, groups should be kept apart and movement around the school site kept to a minimum”*. We have therefore made the decision that for the start of term at least, students in Years 7, 8 and 9 will be taught in their form class bases with teachers travelling to classrooms to deliver KS3 lessons. Students will engage with their PE lessons as usual and there will be limited movement within the Year 9 ‘bubble’ to facilitate setting arrangements. Year groups will be clustered in the following areas of school:

Year 7 – Humanities and Languages

Year 8 – Maths & RE Classrooms

Year 9 – English Classrooms



Students in KS4 and KS5 will be able to access teaching rooms across school site. This is to facilitate access to specialist rooms and equipment necessary for external examination courses. Social distancing markers are in place across the school site and we have recalibrated the current one way system to ensure we are compliant with the Government guidance which states *“While passing briefly in the corridor or playground is low risk, schools should avoid creating busy corridors, entrances and exits.”*

Break and Lunch

Social times at breaks and lunch will see the school site ‘zoned’ into different areas for different year group bubbles to enjoy their time together

All year groups will still have one breaktime and one lunchtime each day. We have implemented ‘split’ lunch and break times which will enable us to keep year group bubbles apart. This will mean that Years 7, 8 and 9 will take their break and lunch times when Years 10, 11 and 6th Form are in lessons, and then this arrangement will ‘switch’ so that KS3 are in lessons whilst KS4 and 5 enjoy their break and lunch times.

All students will still be able to purchase food which will be offered on a ‘grab and go’ basis either from the school Dining Room or satellite stations within year group ‘zones’ around site.

Behaviour Policy

All students of St Nicholas Catholic High School are required to follow the guidance and expectations outlined in the school’s Behaviour Policy. This policy was updated and ratified by the Governing Board prior to the wider re-opening of school to Years 10 and 12 earlier in the term – a copy of this document is available on the school website. Further amendments have been made in preparation for September and a copy of the most recent policy will be made available following consideration and ratification by the Governing Board on 24th August.

Stationery

The recent Government guidance states that *“for individual and very frequently used equipment, such as pencils and pens, it is recommended that staff and pupils have their own items that are not shared.”* Please ensure that your child has the following stationery items and equipment ready for their lessons in September:



The 'Super Seven':

- Pen*
- Pencil*
- Ruler*
- Glue Stick*
- Calculator
- Compass
- Rubber
- Sharpener

*The school will be providing one of these items free of charge to each student on the first day of term. In addition, each student will be provided with a whiteboard marker to use with the 'mini-whiteboard' on the back of new student planners.

Transport and Face-coverings

The government guidance for Dedicated School Transport states -

Pupils on dedicated school services do not mix with the general public on those journeys and tend to be consistent. This means that the advice for passengers on public transport to adopt a social distance of two metres from people outside their household or support bubble, or a 'one metre plus' approach where this is not possible, will not apply from the autumn term on dedicated transport.

The approach to dedicated transport should align as far as possible with the principles underpinning the system of controls set out in this document and with the approach being adopted for your school. It is important to consider:

- *how pupils are grouped together on transport, where possible this should reflect the bubbles that are adopted within school*
- *use of hand sanitiser upon boarding and/or disembarking*
- *additional cleaning of vehicles*
- *organised queuing and boarding where possible*
- *distancing within vehicles wherever possible*
- *the use of face coverings for children over the age of 11, where appropriate, for example, if they are likely to come into very close contact with people outside of their group or who they do not normally meet*

Therefore, at St Nicholas we expect students to sit next to someone in the same year group wherever possible and wear a face-covering during their journey.



Face-coverings should be plain with no detail, decoration or logos. They must not be removed during the journey and must be disposed of as instructed on arrival at school - there will be designated face-covering removal zones supervised by staff on arrival. Our Behaviour Policy has been updated to incorporate these requirements.

Public Transport

For those students who use public transport, the guidance remains the same that face coverings are required at all times on public transport for children over the age of 11.

All face-coverings must be removed by all students before entry to school site. Re-usable face-coverings must be placed in a plastic bag inside the student's usual school bag.

Evaluation and Review

The school will undertake a formal evaluation and review of its Re-opening Plan and Risk Assessment every 3 weeks. This will be informed by a range of evidence including Government and Local Authority guidance.

