



11th September 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

I write to provide an update on start of term arrangements at the end of our first full week back at school following school closure on March 20th.

Firstly, it has been wonderful to welcome back all of our students to St Nicholas this week and they have responded to all that has been asked of them exceptionally well. The new routines and processes have been well received and students have done what we knew they would do – reacted positively, maturely and have been an absolute credit to themselves and the St Nicholas community.

As usual, the Leadership Team have continued to visit classrooms every day and we have observed learning that continues to be purposeful, with students fully engaged and adapting wonderfully to our new classroom arrangements. Transition between lessons on corridors and around site is calm and orderly, and students have quickly navigated our enhanced one way system with ease. New lunch time and break time arrangements are working well and arrangements at the start and end of the day are now well established. As the newest members of our community, Year 7 students have had a wonderful week and it has been a joy to watch them grow in confidence in the short time since the start of term.

Thank you for the feedback that you have continued to offer since school re-opened. I can inform you that the Leadership Team are meeting at the end of each day to triage all feedback from staff, students, parents and carers. Initial observations confirm that the Re-opening Plan I shared with you on 24th August has proved immensely successful at safeguarding the safety and welfare of our community whilst retaining as much as practically possible, of the student experience here at St Nicholas. Like all schools, our plan is constantly evolving and we are making minor improvements as we respond to many ‘unknown firsts’ that we couldn’t have foreseen when we responded to the Government guidance in July and August. In addition to the daily feedback received from students around school, we will be gathering more formal feedback via the School Council over the coming weeks and as always will respond accordingly.

I am aware that there have been logistical challenges surrounding transport to school on the buses and trains and this is an area that we are constantly reviewing in dialogue with the Local Authority, transport providers and I have also contacted our local MP Mike Amesbury. We have written to families of specific routes to seek views regarding possible additional capacity and to clarify the issue of bubbles and face coverings on designated school transport.



As stated in our Re-opening guidance issued to Parents and Carers on 24th August, we expect all students to wear a face covering when travelling on a school bus. This position is aligned to current Government guidance to schools and Local Authorities. Should you believe your child to be exempt from wearing a face covering when travelling on a school bus then this is permissible in line with Government exemption criteria - please do contact Mrs MacCready, our School Business Manager to discuss your individual circumstances.

As always the Advent Term at St Nicholas is filled with many different events for parents, students and the wider community. We are looking to continue with as many events as possible via virtual platforms, and following on from the success of our Yr 12 virtual Parent Information Evening last night further details will be provided over the coming weeks of the following events:

16th September - Year 11 Parent Information Evening

23rd September - Year 10 Parent Information Evening

29th September - Year 7 Retreat Day

30th September - Year 11 Careers Day

30th September – Whole School Open Evening

We are also continuing to engage with new ways of working within the school day. Prayers and reflections have been offered through virtual assemblies to each year group this week delivered by myself and your child's Year Leader and instead of our usual start of term Mass in the Sports Hall, the school community will mark the start of the Advent Term through a live liturgy broadcast from the school Chapel involving students, staff and local clergy.

In closing, I have attached a series of FAQs that we have received over the first days of the term in relation to illness, attendance and other matters. Should you require clarification on any aspect of our Re-opening Plan then please do contact us via the usual channels of communication.

I will update you as we progress through the term together and I offer sincere thanks for all of the support you have offered throughout the first week - we do not take this for granted.

Yours sincerely

Richard Woods

Headteacher



ST NICHOLAS CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

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