



5<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

### **St Nicholas Catholic High School – School Closure**

Following the announcement by the Prime Minister yesterday, we write to inform you that St Nicholas Catholic High School will be closed to students from Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> January until further notice.

We do not underestimate the significant burden that this will, once again, place on families at this uncertain time, and the difficulties it will present for all our students. We want to assure you that over the last 48 hours, staff at school have worked tirelessly to secure alternative arrangements for students to work from home.

### **Remote Learning**

To support your child's ongoing learning we have implemented the following measures:

- ✓ **All content will be provided via MS Teams with students following their usual daily timetable** - a guide on how to access these lessons and further details are available here on the school website - <https://st-nicholas.cheshire.sch.uk/remote-learning/>
- ✓ **The timings of lessons will be the same as the 2020-21 school day and school will start at 8.45 with a virtual Form Period.**

Staff will be monitoring their emails on a daily basis, but we ask for your patience as staff look to balance their professional responsibilities alongside their own personal health and that of their dependants.



### **Forgotten Passwords**

If a parent, carer or student forgets their password for Office or Ruler they should send an email to: [admin@st-nicholas.cheshire.sch.uk](mailto:admin@st-nicholas.cheshire.sch.uk) requesting a password reset. Our Technician will be monitoring this inbox on a daily basis and will respond as soon as possible. If the password reset is requested by a parent or carer then they need to include the student's username in the request.

### **Examinations**

As I write this letter today, A-Level and GCSE examination arrangements for this year remain unclear. The Education Secretary, Gavin Williamson, is due to give further details and guidance tomorrow and we will look to update students and families as soon as possible.

### **Pastoral Care and Support**

Of equal importance to lessons is the expectation that all students engage with their daily Form Period. This is an important part of the day's learning and time will be spent focusing on the pastoral curriculum, engaging with Sacred Space, meeting with the Form Teacher, providing pastoral support, and checking on how learning is going.

Please also note that when School is open from Monday to Friday, there is a 'Drop-in' service available where students can meet with a Learning Mentor. This service supports students in a range of ways focussing particularly on students' well-being and positive emotional and mental health. This service will be available 'virtually' during school hours (term-time only) from Wednesday 6th January and will operate as follows:

- Any student can e-mail: [Drop-in@st-nicholas.cheshire.sch.uk](mailto:Drop-in@st-nicholas.cheshire.sch.uk)
- Students must only e-mail from their school e-mail account
- There will be different Learning Mentors responding at different times; student should not expect or request a specific Learning Mentor
- E-mails will be responded to in order of priority; students should not assume a response on the same day
- The Learning Mentor will either respond by:
  1. E-mailing directly to your child's school e-mail address
  2. By phone: the Learning Mentor will always require to speak with a parent / carer at the start and end of the phone call. If this is not possible, the phone call will not take place.



Just like in school this is not a 24-hour service: if your child has an urgent need for either their own or somebody else's well-being, they should speak to you and / or refer to the directory of different support services shown on the school website

<https://st-nicholas.cheshire.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Emotional-Wellbeing.pdf>

### **Questions and Queries**

Understandably, there may be questions and concerns that arise as we respond to this ongoing situation together. In the first instance, I would politely request that you access official Government sources of information via the website: [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk). Additionally, we will continue to post responses to Frequently Asked Questions on the school website Covid-19 page.

Should you then require further clarification, I would ask that you use the following email addresses in the first instance:

- ✓ **Examination Information** – please note, as I am sure you will appreciate, we will be unable to specify any further information until arrangements are confirmed by the Department of Education. Following this, all questions in relation to examinations should be forwarded to Mr Spencer: [s.spencer@st-nicholas.cheshire.sch.uk](mailto:s.spencer@st-nicholas.cheshire.sch.uk).
- ✓ **Subject specific questions in relation to work set** – please email your child's class teacher directly.
- ✓ **All other questions and concerns** should be sent to [admin@st-nicholas.cheshire.sch.uk](mailto:admin@st-nicholas.cheshire.sch.uk). This email address will be monitored daily and your email forwarded to the most appropriate staff member available. We ask for your patience and understanding as questions are triaged.

**We will continue to post responses to Frequently Asked Questions on the school website Covid-19 Page.**

### **Safeguarding**

If you have any concerns during this period of school closure then please follow relevant guidance on the School Website under 'what to do if you have concerns about a child' <https://st-nicholas.cheshire.sch.uk/safeguarding/#1512142110128-d6b6edb8-9bc9>



### **Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> January Year 10 Parents' & Carers' Evening**

Our virtual Parents' and Carers' Evening will continue as planned from 4.15pm – 7.30pm.

### **Free School Meal Vouchers**

Please note that vouchers will continue to be posted home to eligible families in lieu of Free School Meals not being taken in school. We will update families as the term progresses.

### **School Events**

We are currently auditing our school calendar and will offer further guidance on scheduled events planned for the term ahead.

### **Next Steps Together**

You can be assured that the Senior Leadership Team will remain in regular communication with each other, Subject Leaders, Pastoral Leaders and Support Staff during the weeks ahead. We have established clear 'behind the scenes' methods of communication to ensure that we can receive, discuss and respond to information, requests and suggestions as they arise. We will continue to use Parentpay, Twitter and our School Website to keep you updated on a regular basis.

We thank you, as always, for the continued support you offer to the St Nicholas community.

Yours sincerely

**Richard Woods**  
Headteacher

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## **REMOTE LEARNING ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### **What to expect:**

There will be a variety of ways in which students will be engaging with their learning, and individual departments will decide which activities best support their curriculum schemes of learning in line with Government expectations and guidance.

Where possible, work should be completed in student exercise books/folders unless otherwise stated within the instructions. If students do not have their exercise books, students should complete this on paper. All students will be given a glue stick on their return to school to insert all work completed at home into their class work books and folders.

Departments may wish for students to engage through 'Live Chat' during a streamed lesson. There may also be occasions where they wish to see the students and ask that cameras and/or microphones are turned on. This is to address common misconceptions, to question students and ascertain understanding, to provide feedback and to challenge students during their online learning.

### **What you can do to help:**

As parents and carers you are not expected to become teachers. Simply providing your children with some structure at home will help them.

- Encourage your child to establish a routine each day. They should follow their normal school timetable and complete set work and participate in live lessons at the same time that their lesson would have been in school.
- Create a school environment - a quiet area to work. If mobile phones are not required for online learning it may be beneficial to have a mobile free zone.
- Read through the Teams guidance with your child. This will also be available on our website. This includes everything you would expect, from submitting assignments, accessing resources, to interacting with teachers. Students in KS3 have received instructions on how to access Teams in their Computing lessons. A guide is available here on the school website - <https://st-nicholas.cheshire.sch.uk/remote-learning/>
- Wherever possible, your child will complete their timetabled lessons in the same way they would if they were attending school.
- Encourage your child to use their student planner to record the work they have been set, this will help with organisation.



### **What we expect from your child:**

As outlined in the protocols issued to all parents, carers and students:

1. The Microsoft Teams invite for lessons will not be published on line but will be sent directly to students via their individual school email address and added to the Teams posts. My child will not share this link with any other persons.
2. My child will use Microsoft Teams or their school email account to communicate with teachers and keep any communication in line with our ICT Plan. They must not use personal email accounts.
3. My child will join these sessions with microphones muted and video cameras turned off.
4. My child understands that questions and answers take place by raising their virtual hand and waiting for the teacher to ask them to unmute their microphone or through written chat. Voice and Chat questions can be heard or read by other members of the Team in the live lesson.
5. My child understands that any communication that they make will follow the usual expectations of behaviour at St Nicholas Catholic High School and will be in line with the ICT Acceptable Use Policy they sign at the beginning of each academic year.
6. My child understands that they will not undertake third party recordings of the events.
7. My child understands that the lesson via Teams is private and cannot be recorded or shared. All content is subject to the same policies regarding behaviour and use of technology that we have in school.
8. My child will:
  - Follow the 4 R's at all time
  - Conduct themselves as expected in a regular lesson or classroom in line with our expectations as Catholic school community.
  - Make sure that all communications, including forum posts, with students, teachers or others are appropriate and sensible
  - Send and receive messages to do with school purposes only
  - Send nothing that can be seen as illegal, rude, insulting or that contravenes the school behaviour Policy guidelines and expectations
  - Attend lessons on time
  - Refrain from personal comments towards other students
  - Respect everyone's opinion



- Not generate comments or content that hinders the good order of the session e.g. unnecessary messaging in the chat
  - Allow the teacher to lead the lesson
  - Follow the guidance outlined at the back of the Student User Guide
9. My child understands that failure to engage with these protocols may result in the withdrawal of this method of remote learning at any time. Further discussions will then take place with parents and carers in line with our school Behaviour Policy.
10. My child understands that a teacher reserves the right to remove them should their behaviour or any other household member cause concern or disruption to the learning experience.

