


All Hallows Catholic High School



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Headteacher: Mr C Horrocks B.A.

Friday 22nd January 2021

Dear Parent / Carer,

I wrote to you upon our return to school after the Christmas break about the school's plans to deliver our curriculum during the current period of lockdown. The purpose of writing today is to update you on a number of developments since then and to give some details about both upcoming events and decisions which are being pondered at a national level which will impact on aspects of school life.

Staffing Changes

At the start of this term, we welcomed four new members of staff to the school. Mr Jenkins joined us in the History Department, Mr Henderson joined us as the new Head of English and Mrs Walsh returned to the school, joining the Mathematics Department. Our new Office Manager is Mrs Dawson. All four have settled well into their roles despite joining us during this challenging lockdown period.

This week, we have appointed Miss Conlon and Mrs Noad to the position of Learning Manager for Years 8 and 9 respectively. They replace Mrs D'Arcy and Mr Marsden who have both relinquished their role as Year Manager after a number of years of excellent service in support of the pastoral needs of our pupils. The school would like to thank them for their hard work and for the positive impact they have had on the lives of so many young people. We would also like to thank Mr Abberley for his commitment to the pupils in Year 8, when in recent times, he stepped up temporarily from his role as Assistant Learning Manager, to support the pupils through the challenges they have had to face due to the impact of Covid-19 on their education.

Covid-19 Testing in Schools

Parents and guardians of pupils who have been attending school since January 4th, due to their status as the children of critical workers or who are considered vulnerable, were asked to consent to their children taking a Lateral Flow Covid Test. We thank those parents who gave their consent and we would like to congratulate the pupils for the way in which they engaged with the process and for their excellent conduct when going through what can be quite an unpleasant experience. From Monday 25th January, following advice for Central Government, we will suspend the testing of pupils in school. Our staff will continue to be tested to identify potential asymptomatic carriers of the virus, but pupils will not be required to be part of the programme.

Year 11 Exams

The Department for Education is currently undertaking a consultation process with schools and colleges about its proposals for the summer series of both GCSE and A-level examinations. Rather unhelpfully, in my view, the media are reporting on the 'cancellation' of GCSE exams for our Year 11 pupils. The picture remains uncertain, and when it becomes clearer we will write with details of the process in which we are asked to engage. My advice for the time being, in light of this uncertainty, is that all Year 11 pupils should remain fully engaged in the learning process. It is vital that they attend remote learning lessons and submit their assignments. My strong belief is that there is still all to play for. Whichever method of final assessment is arrived at, be that centre assessed grades or terminal examinations, the foundations for success are being cemented right now in this challenging period of remote education. I recognise, of course, that many of our Year 11 pupils are fully engaged in their learning and are making great progress, and for them I would not wish to cause any unnecessary anxiety. However, the parents of other Year 11s are concerned that the media message regarding 'cancelled' exams is having a detrimental impact on levels of engagement.

Please remember that we remain committed to offering as much support as is felt necessary and that we would welcome regular contact with parents to ensure that we continue to work side by side in the interests of our Year 11s.

Year 7 and 8 Parents' Evenings

Currently, we are still planning to host virtual Parents' Evenings on Thursday January 28th for Year 7 and Thursday February 4th for Year 8. A separate letter will be sent on Monday containing full details of the SchoolCloud system which will be used and the instructions about how to book appointments. We used the same system very successfully for Year 11 pupils in the autumn term and the feedback from the parents of Year 11 pupils regarding the experience was overwhelmingly positive.

Remote Learning

I remain extremely proud of the work of my colleagues in delivering our curriculum remotely in a creative and effective manner. I am also very grateful to the growing number of parents who have written to me, asking to have their thanks passed to colleagues for the quality of their remote learning lessons. We continue to grow and develop our skills in this new way of teaching, while still recognising that we can improve our provision further. However, we have made great strides in a short space of time, ensuring that pupils at All Hallows are receiving a diet which is in line with both our values and our aims, and which fulfils the requirements of the DfE. From Monday, a review of remote education at All Hallows will be posted on the school's website in compliance with the wishes of the DfE. We will continue to review and to further develop our remote provision throughout this period of lockdown and in the event that, upon returning fully to school, we have to continue to provide remote education to pupils asked to self-isolate when identified as a close contact of a pupil who tests positive for the virus.

In conclusion, I wish you all a restful weekend. We are acutely aware that this period of lockdown is hard to endure for our families and staff alike. The strength of our community is that we rise to the challenges we face, we look to each other and our faith for reassurance, and we ensure that all of its members are cared for. Please do not hesitate to contact us to seek help, support or guidance if you feel we can be of assistance.

Yours sincerely,



Mr C Horrocks
Headteacher