

21 May 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

### Re: Possible reopening of school to more pupils in June

You will have heard the announcement that phased reopening of schools in England could begin, at the earliest, from Monday 1<sup>st</sup> June 2020 to year 10 and Year 12 students, **if** the government think it's safe to do so. This is unlikely to be on a full-time basis, but will allow students to get some face-to-face contact with teachers to support their home learning.

It is a very unsettling time for us all, but rest assured that we are doing everything we can to make sure we are ready to receive these year groups if it's safe for our school to reopen in the coming weeks. We have been working tirelessly in assessing the risks and in the process of creating a detailed action plan. Precautions we'll be taking will include:

- Limiting class sizes
- Staggering break times, and pick-up and drop-off times
- Increased cleaning
- Keeping pupils and staff with coronavirus symptoms at home

These precautions are underpinned by the following priorities we feel are important for our pupils and staff at the Academy.

#### **Protecting & Restoring the Mental Health of Pupils**

The pastoral aspect of your child's schooling is now more important than ever. During these uncertain times that has caused stress, worry and anxiety for all, including children - our pastoral team, teachers and trained Designated Bereavement Leads will be at the forefront to support your child on their return. Returning to a routine will be hugely beneficial in terms of their wellbeing, as will face to face contact with their friends and teachers.

If your child is clinically extremely vulnerable, or living with someone who is in this group, they should not come back to school and should continue home learning. If your child is clinically vulnerable (but not clinically extremely vulnerable), you should follow medical advice to decide if they should come back to school. Please refer to [government guidance](#) for further details of these groups. Visit our [Mental Health & Wellbeing](#) page for further details on supporting your child's wellbeing.

#### **Ensuring a Safe & Hygienic School Environment**

During the partial closure, the school has undergone an enhanced clean of the site. Routine daily cleaning will continue and increased frequency has been implemented. We are currently planning how we will maintain social distancing as much as possible by reducing class sizes and reviewing staggered break times. We will also maintain the additional hygiene measures we established before lockdown, including regular handwashing, and access to tissues and hand sanitisers in each classroom as far as possible.

Principal Lisa Peterkin

We are confident that parents will be conscientious and sensible about keeping their child at home if they or others in the household are unwell. We will keep a close eye on pupils too, dealing with any suspected symptoms promptly, safely and sensitively that gives pupils and parents the reassurance they need.

### **What does this mean for your child?**

When your child returns to school, it will be very different to the school they left. The Government guidance suggests (in the first instance) to:

- Keep cohorts together where possible – this means children will remain in the same small groups everyday and will not necessarily work with previous classmates.
  - Ensure that the same teacher(s) or member of staff are assigned to each group – this means your child may have a different teacher to their normal class teacher for the duration of the half term on their return.
  - Ensure that wherever possible children and young people use the same classroom or area of a setting throughout the day.
  - Reduce mixing within school – this means each group may have a different breaktime from other students on site.
  - Use outside space – this means children should be prepared for outdoor learning in all weathers.
  - Adjust transport arrangements where necessary – this means there may be different start and finish times for different groups.
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- When guidance is fully implemented, many of the routines, lessons, aesthetics and relationships our children have come to know and love will be very different. One thing that will certainly not change is our values of **Love, Hope & Trust** which underpin the St Mark's culture and the nurture your child receives from each and every member of our staff. Our staff remain committed and united to ensure that your child's mental well-being remains a priority during this transitional period.

In the meantime, the school is still open **only** for vulnerable pupils and the children of critical workers. We know some employers will be encouraging you to return to work, but we're not in a position right now to extend places to other pupils until we receive further government guidance.

The guidelines released by the Government leave the school with much to consider in order to meet the full demands of returning Year 10 and Year 12 students from Monday 1<sup>st</sup> June. Hopefully you will now have a better understanding of how different school will be in the first instance and we would appreciate your patience at this time as we formulate the safest way forward for the children at St Mark's CofE Academy.

### **Year 10 and Year 12**

**It is important that you let us know whether you will be sending your child into school or not from 1<sup>st</sup> June. Please note you will not be penalized if you choose not to send your child to school. Please follow this link to our [Survey](#) form, it will take less than 5 minutes to complete. Please can you complete by Monday 25 May 2020.**

With half term next week, we will be suspending the home learning time table until we return to school virtually on June 1<sup>st</sup>.

During this week there will still be some optional stretch tasks set by teachers but completion of these tasks is not compulsory. This is to allow parents and students to prioritise health and wellbeing should you wish.

As always, if you or your child have any problems accessing the home learning materials on showmyhomework, please email [homelearning@stmarksacademy.org.uk](mailto:homelearning@stmarksacademy.org.uk)

If you your child has any difficulty understanding or completing specific home learning tasks, please communicate this in Showmyhomework via the comment function to the relevant teacher.

We will be in touch again with parents of children in the aforementioned year groups and priority groups with further details and a provisional plan for return. Thank you for your continuing support at this challenging time.

With Love, Hope and Trust



Lisa Peterkin  
**Principal**

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The Diocese of  
**Southwark**



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