



07 January 2022

Dear Parents and Guardians

It is with great pleasure that I write this as the Headteacher of Notre Dame whilst Mr Davies is temporarily stepping away from his role, to fulfil the position of Interim CEO of St Claire's MAT.

I arrived at this school in September 1997 as Head of RE and Chaplaincy, after previously teaching at St Bernard's in Rotherham for ten years. Back then, it was a huge wrench to leave St Bernard's where I had started my career and enjoyed my time there so much. However, it has proved even harder to remove myself from Notre Dame! I consider myself to be truly blessed to have been part of this special community for so long and feel very honoured and excited to be entrusted with this new role.

Firstly, I would like to wish you all a very Happy New Year and hope that it brings all of us many blessings and joys in the months to come. I am sure, you will also want to join me in sending Mr Davies our very best wishes and prayers, as he begins his new role. It is very reassuring to know as we move forward with the MAT, that it is in the hands of someone who has the knowledge, skills and integrity required to further strengthen our Catholic community of schools.

### **Changes for the start of term**

As we left for the Christmas holidays, we faced a degree of uncertainty about what January would bring. However, it is now clear that reducing the disruption to young people's education remains the priority and our aim will be to deliver, face-to-face, high-quality education to all students as far as we possibly can. It is probable however, that the coming weeks will bring us challenges as COVID case numbers will likely be high, causing some disruption with staffing. However, we are putting contingency plans in place, with the aim of minimising wherever possible, disruption to learning. In order to try and limit transmission in school, we will continue to reassess our risk assessment and will follow government guidelines now in place.

### **Testing**

Regular testing remains a key measure that we can take to limit the spread of the virus. We continue to ask that students take an LFD test twice a week, on Sunday evening/Monday

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Headteacher: Mr S Davies



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morning followed by Wednesday night/Thursday morning, and do not come to school if they test positive.

Neither should they attend school if they have any symptoms of COVID.

### **Onsite testing Monday 10<sup>th</sup> January**

In addition, we are offering testing in school on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> January instead of using this day to invite students in for testing only and delaying the start of term. This is in recognition of the wide geographical distribution of our students and concerns that uptake of testing could be reduced if we took a 'come in for testing only' approach.

Testing students during the day, when they are already in school, should enable us to test a higher number of students, due to them already being on site.

To assist us in taking this approach and to minimise the risk of unnecessary spread of infection, **we would very much appreciate your support in encouraging your child(ren) to take a lateral flow test on the evening (or preferably morning), before they return to school on Monday.**

In line with current guidance, any child testing positive must not attend school, **and from Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> January does not need to take a PCR test to confirm the result.**

A further summary of the most up to date guidance about testing, self- isolation and returning to school will be made available on the website. Most immediately of note however, is that there are changes in relation to when your child (ren) can return to school if they test positive. They may be able to attend sooner than the current 10-day isolation period if they test negative for two consecutive days, from day 7. I would therefore encourage you to ensure your child(ren) test early on day 6 and 7, so that if they have returned two negative tests, they can attend school on the 7<sup>th</sup> day.

A summary of this information is provided below.

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Day 0	Day 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Isolate							Only continue Isolation if LFDs are still positive (+ve) or your child has a fever/ feels unwell.				
Symptoms start Or Positive LFD	Do not test					Test	Test	Test if still +ve	Test if still +ve	Test if still +ve	Stop testing & return to school (if well and no fever is present).
	Do not attend school						Return to school if your child has 2 negative LFDs	Return to school on the day that your child has 2 negative LFDs 24 hours apart & feels well, with no fever.			

### Face coverings

Face coverings help protect the wearer and others against the spread of infection because they cover the nose and mouth, which are the main confirmed sources of transmission of COVID-19. Along with Government guidance we will be asking all students from year 7 to wear facemasks when moving around outside of classrooms, such as in corridors and communal areas **and in classrooms**.

This does not apply in situations where wearing a face covering would impact on the ability to take part in exercise or strenuous activity, for example in PE lessons. Students do not need to wear a mask when outside.

### Students must also wear a face covering when travelling on public transport and school buses.

As in previous times, where students are not able to wear a face covering, we will support them with this and they will not be required to do so.

Although we do have a small supply of face coverings that students can access, it is limited, therefore it would be very helpful if you ensured that your child has a facemask to bring to school each day.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs D Cleary  
Headteacher

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