

13 January 2021

### **Update on COVID arrangements at school**

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope that you and your families are safe and well and that the effects of this pandemic are bearable. I know that some families are under significant pressure and are worried about loved ones and some have even lost family members and friends through this awful time. Our prayers are with you, as always.

I am writing to you today simply to reinforce the message from government and from the local authorities in our area that, while hope is on the horizon in the form of the vaccine roll-out, we remain in the most difficult and risky phase of this pandemic and we must all continue to do all we can to make sure that we come safely out of the other side of it.

We are all immensely grateful to families for the support we have had throughout this and some of the messages from parents and carers that have come into schools have been wonderful. They reflect the hard work that our dedicated staff continue to do in order to make sure that all of your children have the best possible support and experience of education through this - and they are hugely appreciated by our staff. Our remote working arrangements are unrecognisable from the beginning of the pandemic and Head Teachers and their teams are working tirelessly to educate and support your children through online learning and communications. We are focused on making this as consistent as possible and continually improving, as we would in more normal times.

This really does feel like the last great effort before we can see some normality return and I hope that you will continue to support us in doing the very best we can for our children. To that end and in order to keep our whole community safe we are asking the same as others in that where you can keep your children at home during what is hopefully the last phase of this pandemic, you do. We are not asking anything different for our schools than others, just reinforcing the message that the fewer contacts we all have the better, particularly at the moment.

All of us know that for some families it is simply not possible to keep children at home. Where you have to go to work and there is no-one to look after your children then of course they need to be in school. Equally we are not here to judge how 'valuable' your job is, or what your family circumstances are and we will work with every family to support in whatever ways we can. We will shortly have access to more laptops or tablets in many schools and so more families will be able to benefit from this. All I am asking is that you only take up a school place if you really can't do without it. In most cases you will have already thought this through carefully, but circumstances change and it may become possible to keep children at home where you weren't able to before.

Again, thank you to each and every person who is working hard to balance work, home-schooling and the other pressures in your life. It is no mean feat and none of us underestimate how tough it is. Thankfully it looks like the end is in sight, but until then I know you will support us in doing everything we can to keep each other safe.

With the good wishes and prayers of all in our Trust,

Amy Rice  
Chief Executive Officer  
St Margaret Clitherow Catholic Academy Trust