



5<sup>th</sup> January 2021

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**Principal:** Siobhan Kent

Dear Parents and Carers,

It is with a very heavy heart that I, again, write to you to detail our response to the full national lockdown announced yesterday evening.

We know now that the majority of our students will be working remotely for the next six weeks until February half term. This week, Year 11 have compulsory Remote Learning to complete. We have placed optional work on the Go4schools accounts of all Years 7-10 students. From Monday 11<sup>th</sup> January, Remote Learning will be compulsory for all year groups.

St Bernard's will continue to be open during this time to students who are vulnerable and those from Key Worker families who need emergency care. ***Given that the aim of the lockdown is to break as much contact between families as possible, please only use these places if you have no other alternative.*** Students who fall into these categories and attend school will be following the same Remote Learning programme using their Go4Schools accounts as students who are working from home.

If you haven't previously completed the Google Doc for Attendance but would like to reserve a place for your child in school, please could you ensure that you complete this by Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> January 2021 at 3pm. We will resend this for your convenience today.

We will be following the Lockdown Process for Remote Learning which can be found on the website, along with support materials for parents and carers on the following link:

<https://www.sbch.org.uk/welcome-sbcs/parental-communication/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Students will follow their normal timetable of lessons and access the resources and teaching on their Go4Schools account as usual. Lessons will be placed on their accounts on Monday morning each week.

Wherever possible, the Remote Learning that is set for the students follows the same curriculum that the students would be following in school so as to ensure that we mitigate any loss of pace in learning.

When students have completed their work, they need to ensure that this is sent to staff using Google Docs or, where necessary, through an email attachment. We often find that students have been very engaged in Remote Learning at home but forget to send work through to teachers, thus causing concern about the level of work completed. If you could encourage your child, at the end of each day, to ensure



all of their work has been sent, staff can then ensure that they receive timely and rich feedback to support their learning.

It is so important that students engage with their learning whilst at home. We understand completely that sometimes this may be difficult in the home environment, especially if they are on their own. There are a few things you can do to help them:

- 1) Ensure that you have access to their Go4Schools account so that you can see the work that has been set and discuss their day with them.
- 2) Remind them to send through their work as described above in order to receive praise, encouragement and feedback.
- 3) If they are struggling, encourage them to work on the subjects that they enjoy and feel comfortable with, working up to the more challenging subjects
- 4) Most importantly – don't panic! If you or your child is struggling with remote learning, please email the staff to alert them to the need for support. Key staff contacts can be found in their subject areas on the following link: <https://www.sbch.org.uk/teaching-and-learning/curriculum-areas/>

Our Year 11 students now face uncertainty about the accreditation of their GCSEs. We await government guidance on how they will be assessed and we will update you as soon as we have this information. The best course of action that our students can take at the moment is to complete their online learning with support from their subject teachers and let us know if they need additional help. I am confident that our systems in school will support their accreditation, as they did for last years' Year 11 students, so please reassure them that they will leave with the results that they deserve and no less!

Every week, the Academic Mentors of the students will contact you to touch base, provide support and listen to any concerns that you may have. They will also be able to pass on questions to other staff and ask those staff to get in touch with you or your child, if you need it. Sometimes it will just be a quick call to check that everything is ok.

Your child will also be contacted weekly by their Head of Year. This is so that they can maintain a sense of Form spirit, receive pastoral support and care as well as an opportunity to reply to those emails to get direct support from their Head of Year. Tammy, as Chaplain, will also send out collective worship to support the students in their absence.

For families who are in receipt of Free School Meals, we are in the process of finalising how we will support you during this time. We will update you by Friday 8<sup>th</sup> January with the details of how to access this support.

During these times, communication is vital. We will do our best to keep you informed as parents and carers as much as we possibly can. This will always be through a text message alert, sometimes with



links to letters and information. Likewise, it is important that you contact us if you need us. The best way to do this is via an email to the relevant staff who will be monitoring this communication daily.

I would just ask our community to be mindful that our staff also have challenges in their own lives with childcare, dependants and their own health. As always, I ask for your empathy, patience and kindness during this time.

Equally, please don't struggle at home or allow your child to feel isolated. As a mother, I fully understand how these quick changes in routine, fear of missing friendships and anxiety of working alone can affect our beautiful children. Even those who seem, on the face of it, to be highly functioning, are often affected by this chopping and changing of life. Please know that you are not on your own, that we are at the end of a phone call or an email and that there is always something that we can do to help.

Finally, I pray dearly that we all stay safe. We have shown over the course of nearly a year, that kindness, love and compassion go an awful long way to keeping our community soul beating. Just hold on a little longer, be strong for a short while more and please God we'll celebrate coming together again very shortly.

I will stay in touch with as much information as I have, as timely as I can.

Stay safe and God Bless,

Siobhan Kent  
Principal