

26th March, 2021



Dear Parent/Carer

Coronavirus Update 54

Today, of course, is last day of the Spring Term – which seems quite odd, given that our students have only been back in school for three weeks! But then it has been an odd term all round...

The end of term is always a good time to say ‘Thank You’ (though really, *any* time is a good time to be grateful!) – but before I turn to thank four members of staff who are stepping down from their roles, I would like to thank all our students’ parents and carers for their support since Christmas. From the sudden announcements of a third national lockdown in January through to the very high take-up of our testing offer in March (an offer which nearly 80% of families took up), your support has been essential – we couldn’t have ‘kept the show on the road’ without it.

And that support has an impact. The high take-up of testing has meant that in the last three weeks, we have only had to put in place one set of self-isolations, affecting 25 students – our other 1,030 students have been able to enjoy their education uninterrupted. So please do keep testing your child; it really does make a difference! And please let us know *via* admin@stmargaretsacademy.com, even in the holidays, about any positive test results, as they may be a need for further self-isolation as a result.

Incidentally, if you do have to self-isolate as a result of a contact with a positive case, you may be able to claim financial support from the Government. You can find more details about this [here](#).

Thank you

After a number of years as our Deputy Director of Pastoral Care (and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead), Mr Kingston is stepping down from the positions to enable him to focus on his work as a Head of Year and PE teacher. I’ve certainly enjoyed working with him over the years: his commitment to his work, and to our school, cannot be faulted, and I know he is held in high regard by a large number of our students (and staff too). The fact that he will continue to lead Year 7 and teach PE is good news for all of us – but I wouldn’t want today to pass without a public ‘thank you’ for all you’ve given in your Deputy Director role over the years, Mr Kingston – we’re truly grateful!

Mr Gibbons, Mr O’Gorman and Mrs Roberts have served as Associate Senior Leaders for a while now, and their terms of office also come to an end today. I’m grateful to all three for their input at Senior Leadership Team meetings, and to Mr O’Gorman and Mrs Roberts in particular for their sterling work on the ICT helpdesk over the last year. All three colleagues will continue in their main school roles (as Head of Year 8, Head of Computer Science and ICT, and Head of Marketing and Careers respectively) – something for which again, I am very grateful.

Centre-Assessed Grades

As you’ll be aware, schools will be responsible for submitting centre-assessed grades for all external examinations this summer. We were promised some additional guidance on how we might do this before the end of March, and predictably it has been published (see [here](#)) on the last day of term! We’ve not yet had chance to digest all the implications (!), but we hope to be in a position to say more in the next *Update*.

Uniform

Because of the need to keep windows open in classrooms, we've been allowing students to wear their coats in class (and around school) over the last three weeks. Given the warmer weather we can reasonably expect after Easter, however, we'll be reverting to our normal coats-off-inside rule from next term. I'd be grateful if you could reinforce this message with your son/daughter – and I'd also be grateful if you could ensure they have a good pair of school shoes for the new term, as a number of students have been wearing trainers lately. There are more details about acceptable footwear in school [here](#).

Dr Silverstone's section

Dr Silverstone, our Director of Pastoral Care, has two matters to bring to our attention today. He writes:

*“This week's first topic is the **dangers of trespassing on railway lines**. Network Rail have reported an increase of incidences of young people trespassing on railway lines, and of course that means an increase in serious injuries. They launched their 'You vs Train' campaign in 2020 and now they are working with 'learnliveuk' to raise awareness of the dangers of trespassing on or near railway lines. It is often during holiday times that these incidences of trespassing occur, which is why we are sharing this message with you now.*

“Learnlive have produced a film, which is quite hard-hitting and may be upsetting, but which contains protective and powerful messages. I recommend you watch it and consider whether or not it would be suitable to show to your children. The video is found at <https://learnliveuk.com/network-rail-secondary-school-safety-talk/>. To access the video, you need to enter the following email address when prompted: railsafety@learnliveuk.com. Then put in the school's name and postcode, L17 6AB, and you will be able to view the film.

*“Second, you may remember that I wrote recently about how we talk to our young people about race. **Liverpool's Race Equality Taskforce have recently put out a survey** for young people aged 11-18 from a Black or other racial minority background. The survey will only take a few minutes to complete and is confidential; as an incentive, entrants will be entered into a prize draw to win one of a number of £50 vouchers for an online shop of their choosing. The survey can be found at <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/retyoungpeople/>, while Liverpool's Race Equality Taskforce website is [here](#).”*

Finally...

As I type, the sun is shining, and I can see that the trees on Aigburth Road are beginning to bud. Not only are indications of spring blossoming, but our slow road out of a long Covid winter is giving us cause for hope: restrictions are being eased and signs of more normal times ahead can be spotted too.

Roads also feature in the Easter story. Jesus' journey into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday was one that started with hopeful crowds – although their hope was ultimately misplaced; but Cleopas' journey on the Emmaus road out of Jerusalem ended in the most hope-filled fashion imaginable! I wish you and your family a truly hopeful two weeks away from school, and a chance to relax, rest and recharge.

We'll be in touch again next term; happy Easter!

Yours faithfully



Stephen Brierley
Principal.