

16th April, 2021



Dear Parent/Carer

Coronavirus Update 55

Welcome back! I trust you and your family had a restful (if cold!) Easter holiday, and that your son or daughter has quickly fallen back into the routines of school life. As ever, we're here to support you if there are any reasons why that process has not happened as smoothly as it might: do please get in touch if there's anything we can do help.

Ramadan

I know a number of St Margaret's families will currently be observing Ramadan, and I would like to wish you *Ramadan Mubarak!* We've received a couple of questions about arrangements for students who are fasting, and I thought it would be helpful to share these more widely.

Firstly, we're mindful of the benefits of physical exercise (even during a fast), so unless there are additional medical reasons why fasting students cannot participate in PE at all, we expect them to take part in PE lessons. However, it's also appropriate for such students to cut back on strenuous physical exercise. Our PE team is therefore very happy to allow students who are fasting for Ramadan to take part in "light duties" only in their PE lessons.

Secondly, on students' short days they generally have a packed lunch with their tutor group. If a student who is fasting wishes to spend their short-day lunch-time away from their tutor group, we've set aside a room which they can use (and can also provide a prayer mat if it is time for them to pray). Please let me know (scbrierley@stmargaretsacademy.com) if you would like your son to use this room.

SLT

Given the recent changes in our Senior Leadership Team, I thought it might be appropriate to remind you of the current team. The Senior Leadership Team presently comprises:

- Stephen Brierley Principal
- Andrea Penketh Vice Principal (part-time) Ethos, Pupil Premium, Looked After Children
- Steve Slater Vice Principal Curriculum, Timetable, Options
- Robbie Lawton Assistant Principal Post-16 provision
- Carmel Manwaring Assistant Principal Teaching and Learning
- Dan Silverstone Assistant Principal Pastoral Care
- Mark D'Arcy Director of Finance Finance, Premises, Health and Safety

GCSE Centre-Assessed Grades

Year 11 families should have received a letter setting out their upcoming assessments that will assist teachers in determining our students' centre-assessed grades. If you didn't receive a copy, or if you have any questions about its contents, it's now available on our website [here](#).

Please note that PE and Learning for Life lessons are continuing throughout this half-term. Punctuality and attendance is as important on Fridays as it is on any other day of the week!

We are still awaiting guidance from the Government on the Year 11 (and Year 13) leaving date. You may be aware that all Estimated Grades have to be submitted to the Exam Boards by Friday 18th June; we have asked teachers here to submit them internally a week beforehand (so we can check the grades and evidence underpinning them before sending them off).

Students studying a BTEC (eg BTEC Engineering) at any level should note that they may still need to attend school after any published leaving date in order to complete non-exam elements of their course. In addition, after the official leaving date we may be able to offer some (probably virtual) 'bridging work' for any students who are thinking of studying a subject beyond GCSE; and we have also discussed the possibility of having an event to mark Year 11's departure – a traditional Leavers' Service, perhaps – after Monday 21st June, when (under the current 'roadmap') most Covid restrictions are due to be lifted.

Please accept my apologies for the vagueness of these plans at the moment (due to circumstances beyond our control!). We'll be in touch once we're able to confirm what's happening.

Dates

We are able, however, to confirm some dates for Year 8 and Year 10 students.

This year's Year 8 Parents' Evening will take place (virtually) on **Wednesday 12th May**.

For Year 10 students, we intend to send out an 'AMIS' report (*ie* a brief report indicating whether students are making the progress we expect) before May half-term. There will be a (virtual) Year 10 Parents' Evening on **Monday 14th June**, after which Year 10 will take some exams; the results of these will be reported on a grade card before the end of term.

Dr Silverstone's section

Dr Silverstone, our Director of Pastoral Care, writes:

"You may have seen in the news recently discussion of sexual harassment and sexual assault that has been reported by children and young people on the Everyone's Invited website. The testimonies posted there describe unacceptable behaviour, much of which would constitute serious criminal offences. Thankfully, both Ofsted and the government have responded in a positive and supportive way to the concerns raised.

"I would like to reassure all our families that St Margaret's takes issues of sexual harassment and assault very seriously. We understand our responsibility to educate our young people about sex and relationships, appropriate conduct and what to do in situations where anyone feels they are at risk of harm. We further recognise the important role we play in teaching our young people to develop positive and appropriate values that lead to a respectful, tolerant and positive values.

"We are committed to engaging with all of our students and listening to any concerns they may have. Students know that they can speak to any adult in school, but in particular their Head of Year or to me as safeguarding lead. Where appropriate, we will put in place support within school, signpost and refer to other agencies who can support our students and liaise with families to help keep them safe.

"As always, if any parents or carers have any concerns about issues within school, please do contact us by telephone or emailing safeguarding@stmargaretsacademy.com".

Finally...

I know that a number of St Margaret's families are intending to watch the Duke of Edinburgh's funeral tomorrow. Whilst all funerals are naturally sad occasions, I have found it refreshing to reflect on a life of service, a life given to helping others – an apt theme for the Easter season, if ever there was one. As a school, we “*all come together to learn*” (as our Mission Statement puts it) – and learning how to serve is one of the most valuable lessons of all. “*So let us learn how to serve...*”

With best wishes for the weekend,

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Brierley', enclosed within a thin black rectangular border.

Stephen Brierley
Principal.