

2nd July, 2021



Dear Parent/Carer

Parental update 66

I appreciate that for many St Margaret's families, the last week has once again been one when your son or daughter has been at home. We've been doing our best to keep 'live lessons' and assignments going, but I'm aware that owing to continuing high rates of staff absence, we haven't been able to teach every lesson live. Happily, the number of cases has dropped this week, and the cases that have been notified have generally led to fewer self-isolations (usually because the student who tested positive was self-isolating anyway). With a good number of staff and students due to return to school next week, there is a possibility that things might get back to some sort of 'Covid normal' before the end of term!

I appreciate that many students (and parents!) will be concerned about the impact the current self-isolations may be having on assessments, end-of-year reports, *etc.* For now, we're setting the assessments as we have said we would – *ie* if a student misses an assessment for whatever reason, they will take it when they're next in school. I anticipate being able to let you know how this will impact on our reporting arrangements next week.

Farewell

This week we've said 'goodbye' to Mr Atherton, one of our Learning Support Assistants. Mr Atherton has made a real difference to the life of the student he has been supporting for nearly two years, and he leaves with our gratitude for all that he has been able to do for that young man. Good luck for wherever the future takes you, Mr A!

Support for Parents

Liverpool City Council has let us know about a service called



Parent Talk – a free and confidential live chat with a qualified parenting coach in the UK run by the charity Action for Children. Staff are there to talk about family life, caring for children or managing your wellbeing as a parent. The chat service is a safe space for a parent to share their concerns: there will be someone to listen, take time to understand a parent's situation, and then work with the parent to find possible solutions. If appropriate, they may suggest ideas for where to get extra support.

You can contact Parent Talk through [this link](#).

Dr Silverstone writes...

"For this week's safeguarding update, I'd like to point you in the direction of the 5 Rights Foundation, an organisation who work with and on behalf of children to make systemic changes to the digital world that will ensure it caters for children and young people.

"Their most recent project is a campaign called 'Twisted Toys' which is a quirky way of raising concerns about the dangers young people face online; the campaign is designed to get the tech

industry to take this issue seriously. You really need to watch the short videos to fully understand the nature of the campaign, but you can get a flavour of the campaign by reading the opening sentences of their press launch: 'Imagine if traditional toys carried the same harms for children as the digital world. A teddy bear that collects and sells their personal data, a walkie talkie that connects children to adult strangers, or a night light that is designed to keep them awake. This is the reality of the digital world's effect on children. Twisted Toys brings this reality to life'. If you want to watch the videos, you can find them [here](#).

"I am sharing this with you as the videos may well offer a good way into discussion of the important issue of online safety with your children. Online safety is something we teach in school, so all students will cover this as part of our curriculum, but it is always useful to reinforce this learning at home."

Finally...

I don't regularly buy a daily newspaper, but one of the national broadsheets carried a cartoon this morning showing a Dad comforting his self-isolating son. "*Cheer up,*" the father is saying. "*Very soon it will be the end of not-going-to-school and the start of not-going-on-holiday.*"

A shorter *Update* than usual this week – reflecting the fact that we've been at full stretch for much of the time. We'll be in touch again next Friday with news about reports, end-of-term arrangements, *etc.* Until then, do stay safe, and *please keep testing!*

Yours faithfully

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

Stephen Brierley
Principal.