**23rd April 2020**

**Dear Parent/Guardian,**

I hope that you and your family are all well. These are tough times for you all but hopefully by following the government guidelines we will overcome COVID-19. Our prayers and thoughts are with you. From next week, I wanted to update you on a few improvements/changes the school is making to improve home learning and pupil engagement:

**MS Teams – Now Years 7-10**

We are currently on MS Teams for Years 9 & 10. **From next Monday our teaching staff will be on MS Teams for all classes in Years 7-10 apart from CORE PE.** This will ensure all students are getting direct contact/feedback and guidance on their school work from their teachers. There is a small caveat to this, that due to the current lockdown we do have a small number of teaching staff who are currently not well or looking solely after their own children and therefore on their busiest days in the week they cannot be sat by their laptop for 5 periods a day. On this occasion, the teacher will contact the class by email to confirm they will be available on another day that week when they were due to have a lesson on their timetable. Teachers can also reply to emails/messages later in the day when they are able to.

**Guidance - Engagement – Home learning**

It has been only a few days but engagement on MS teams has been fairly low particularly with Year 10. Therefore, please can I ask you to check with your son/daughter that they have access to MS Teams and are logging on. Teachers are there sharing PowerPoints/documents and resources to help with home learning and the teaching of their subject so it’s important they don’t miss this. Initially, for Year 10 students by next Friday 1st May if your son/daughter has not been online your teacher will be calling home to check they have everything they need and can access the work. Any issues can then be addressed but please encourage your son/daughter to start logging on and completing the work if you haven’t already done so.

**Guidance on Appropriate Work – Website**

From next Monday, all work will be set by email or through MS Teams for Years 7-10 for all subjects. Work will no longer be added to our website. However, we recognise the importance parents play in ensuring they know what their son/daughter has to do and can support them with the work and track what your children are doing. Therefore, there will be a short summary for each subject for Years 7-10 for each week on the website of what the pupils are expected to do the following week.

With regards to appropriate work, clearly for the first two weeks some of the work we were setting our students was revision and tasks on concepts topics they had already done. We are now three weeks into this and in order to keep our students motivated and engaged, please can you reinforce to your son/daughter that teachers have looked at their Scheme of Work that they were planning on following and picked the topics/lessons that can be covered by students at home. Therefore, students need to know that this work is important and is going to further their progress in these subjects.

**Mental Health & Wellbeing**

The coronavirus crisis is having a huge impact on young people. The loss of routine, and exam cancellations are all factors that are causing stress and increased anxiety, as well as additional health concerns. For teenagers this can be a really challenging time and we are here to support you all. Please click on the link below for expert advice and guidance to get you through this challenging time.

<https://www.stgcc.co.uk/page/?title=Student+Help+and+Advice&pid=233>

**Safeguarding - Pupils**

**staysafe@stgcc.co.uk**

This email address is available **only for pupils** if you are feeling concerned for your safety, wellbeing or anxiety which is affecting your ability to function as you normally would. This will be looked at daily. For parents, the email address will be emailed to all students via their school email accounts.

**Important Dates Cancelled/Postponed:**

* Year 7-10 Presentation Evening – Postponed to Thursday 2nd July 2020 – 7pm
* Day of Faith – Thursday 2nd July 2020 – Cancelled.
* Year 7 Parents Evening – Tuesday 23rd June 2020 5-7pm

**Government Announcement 19th April 2020 – All Students - Home Learning**

The Department for Education announced it will be supporting free online lessons for primary and secondary pupils through BBC Bitesize and Oak national academy at:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize>

<https://www.thenational.academy/>

I am sure this will be a very good additional resource for your son/daughter to use at home with daily lessons in Maths & English as well as some other core subjects now available from today to support them with their home learning. Please can I ask that students don’t use this instead of MS Teams (which gives them direct contact with their teachers for all their subjects) but in addition to maximise their learning.

**Laptops**

In the weekend’s press release, the Department for Education has said it will lend laptops or tablets to particular students. They were children in care, children working with a social worker or a disadvantaged student in Year 10. There is still no logistical information about how this is going to be set up. Therefore, please can you give us time to review the next steps.

Finally, please stay safe, follow the guidance by the government, and look after each other. We will continue to keep in touch.

Yours faithfully,

**Mr J Habberley
Headteacher**