

Oaklands Catholic School and Sixth Form College

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Edith Stein Catholic Academy Trust
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

Registered in England and Wales, Company No 07721932

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Our Ref: MQ/SM

21 April 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

Ordinarily, at this time of year, I would be capturing the joy of having your children back with us after their Easter break. It felt very strange being back in my office on Monday to start the Summer Term in an almost empty school.

As you know, we remained open throughout the Easter holidays for children of key workers and vulnerable children. I would like to thank my staff who have covered teaching and administrative duties with continued dedication and professionalism, for which I am extremely grateful. I would also like to thank St Peter's School who hosted us.

As promised, I want to keep in contact with all parents and carers, writing once a week over the lockdown period. Information will continue to be updated on the school website so I would urge you to view this regularly: <https://www.oaklandscatholicschool.org/coronavirus/>

We will of course communicate separately with various groups of parents on an 'as needed basis'.

Health and Wellbeing

One of the features on the website relates to emotional wellbeing, mental health and online safety. This can be found under 'INFORMATION FOR PARENTS DURING SCHOOL CLOSURE' via the above link. We have posted a number of articles and useful links and this week, we have been asked by the Local Authority to signpost parents to The Hampshire and Isle of Wight Educational Psychology Telephone Support Line. From 20th April, this Telephone Support Line will be available for parents and carers to access for any queries relating to the emotional wellbeing of the children they are caring for: 023 9244 1497.

Prayer Life

Students continue to be sent daily prayers by Miss Keogh, our school Chaplain. A number of parents have asked for these. They will be published on our school website by approximately 11.00am each day. They can be found at

<https://www.oaklandscatholicschool.org/about-us/catholic-life/daily-prayer/>

School Closure

Towards the end of last week, the Government clarified that the lockdown would last for at least another three weeks. This means that for the foreseeable future all schools will continue to remain closed to all pupils, with the exception of children of key workers and additionally, those students who are classed as vulnerable. So please continue to keep your children at home unless they fall into one of these categories.

On Sunday, Gavin Williamson, Education Secretary, said that he could not give a date for when schools would reopen. With a five week half term, it looks unlikely that schools will reopen this side of the Whitsun holiday. There is much speculation as to what will happen thereon after and I don't want to add to it. However, the Governors and Senior Leadership Team have started the process of modelling a number of scenarios, but we will need to wait for clear guidance from the Government regarding expectations of schools before we can finalise these plans and share them with you. However, rest assured that we will contact you as soon as this advice and guidance becomes clear. It is important that we can move safely, quickly and appropriately when the time is right.

Free School Meals

Those parents of children eligible for Free School Meals will have received communication from the school which allows them to access the Free School Meal vouchers through the Government provider, Edenred. This communication included a link to a guide and frequently asked questions to those parents to support the process. Once this guide and the email have been received, all correspondence should be between Edenred and the parent as the school has no control over the processing of the vouchers once the email has arrived with the parent. Full details are in the guide.

Remote Learning

Over the holiday we have reviewed the setting and submitting of work on remote platforms. Whilst many students have mastered this, it is clear that some have not. For Year 7 to Year 10, work will continue to be set on SIMS Engagement. This may direct students to the Teams platform.

We have produced a step by step guide, aimed at supporting students in their use of Teams and in particular ASSIGNMENTS on Teams, which is where work can be set and where it can be handed in: <https://www.oaklandscatholicschool.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Office-365-School-Email-and-OneDrive.pdf>

All students have also been emailed a copy of the slides. If there are any issues in accessing or completing work on Teams, please contact your child's Form Tutor. Hopefully, using this guide you can help your child when they cannot work out what to do.

Please note that students in Years 7-10 will not be set work in PDC for the summer term.

A number of external providers have started to produce educational information and content including the BBC and Oak National Academy. These resources do not always 'mesh' neatly into our schemes of work. Subject staff will direct students to external resources that are relevant to the curriculum and stage of learning.

Finally, I do hope that you and your families managed to enjoy the Easter break and find ways to perhaps make the best of such unusual circumstances. I even ran out of excuses for not cleaning the car! I hope and pray that as a school community, we can overcome these challenges together and look forward to better times ahead. Our unique school ethos has been recognised many times before and now we are calling it into action.

You and your families are always in my thoughts and prayers.

Best wishes

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matthew Quinn', with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Mr Matthew Quinn
Headteacher