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Edith Stein Catholic Academy Trust
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Our Ref: MQ/SM

2 June 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

I hope this letter finds you and your family safe and well and that the half-term holiday provided an opportunity to find a break from normal routines. I want to update you on the current situation, ask for your help in planning for the future, remind you about assessment and then finally reflect on the Season of Pentecost.

Our position regarding the potential re-opening of schools had to change suddenly; it was unfortunate that I had to write to you over the holiday but the change in the position of the Cabinet Office moving secondary face-to-face provision from Monday 1st to Monday 15th June necessitated this. We have now had time to read the secondary guidance, which currently suggests limited contact for Year 10 and Year 12 will be the order of the day until the end of the term. There is little joy in this for Years 7 to Year 9; the Government has said that there are currently no plans to reopen secondary schools for other year groups before the end of the academic year in July. We will plan the next half term on this assumption and will therefore continue to set work using remote platforms.

As I am sure you will appreciate, the situation is both complex and fluid, whilst there has been no change in the secondary guidance since 25th May, previous form suggests this is not cast in tablets of stone. Recent changes for the community at large, for example, allowing people from different families to meet outdoors, plus the pressure being exerted by some quarters to move at a greater speed away from restrictive measures, creates an uneasy tension.

We all want our students back in school, learning and able to be with their friends again. Our teachers want to be back doing what they love doing. However, our priority has to be the health, safety and wellbeing of all members of our school community.

The provision for priority groups, including vulnerable children and children of critical workers who have been eligible to attend throughout the partial closure, remains unchanged. We have produced a short Health and Safety presentation for students who are on site; our priority groups will see this first followed by any other youngsters who come into school.

It is available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r_-0_oYsb4Y

September 2020

Whilst the current situation is foremost in our minds, we have started to turn our attention to the planning for September, including the timetable, assessment points and calendar events. At this juncture, it would be unwise for me to suggest that the start of the new academic year in September will look 'normal', at the very least there will have to be a phased restart; including the holiday, some youngsters will have been out of school for almost 23 weeks by this point.

Writing the school calendar is a series of compromises so events are evenly distributed for each year group and between years. Parents' Evenings, assessment points and reports are considered together. Where these have not taken place this term, one option is to organise an additional face-to-face Parents' Evening or academic mentoring session next academic year. I would be interested in your views on this; we will shortly be issuing a questionnaire that I would invite you to complete.

Remote Learning

In our efforts to ensure that remote learning is successful for learners and works well for teachers, our short survey about what is working well for students was completed before half term. We have now consolidated the findings into a summary for students, families and teachers alike. We were pleased to be able to identify the challenges (technical issues, too much work, not having a teacher to ask) and best ways of relaxing (exercise, talking to friends and reading) amongst our findings. Equally, we have been able to identify an action plan so that our teacher training and student support is targeted where it is most needed. Many thanks are due to the hundreds of respondents; we are both grateful and fascinated by your opinions.

School Uniform

Skoolkit have issued us with the details regarding store re-opening and on-line orders along with the uniform price list and discount codes. Please follow the link for more information
<https://www.oaklandscatholicschool.org/about-us/uniform/>

Should we be able to re-open the nearly new uniform at school, we will advise parents as to dates and times later this half term.

Consolidation Week

For Years 7-Year 9, the week commencing Monday 22nd June will be a Consolidation Week. Traditionally around this time, students in KS3 would experience 'Challenge Week'. During this week, no new work will be set, students will have an opportunity to catch up with and consolidate any existing work. However, departments will be organising and publishing several educational activities that students can engage in. In preparation for this, these activities will be published from 18th June and then repeated from 22nd June.

Consultation for Year 10 and Year 12 Families

Thank you to those families in Year 10 and Year 12 who completed the consultation. Now that we have the secondary guidance, we will issue another short questionnaire to Year 10 families. I will write later in the week in a separate letter to confirm the details of this.

Engagement Grades

The next set of student engagement grades will be completed on Friday 12th June for Year 10 and Year 12 and on Friday 19th June for Years 7, 8 and 9. These will enable us to continue to monitor how well students are accessing and completing the work that is set for them on-line in all subjects. Please do contact your child's Form Tutor in the first instance if there are any issues with accessing the on-line learning platforms or if paper copies of work are required.

Y10 and Year 12 Open Book Assessments

The second of these weeks is to take place next week (8th-12th June). The assessments do give us an indication of engagement, but they are more for teachers and students to see what progress they have made. Please ensure that your child completes and returns these assessments to their teachers by the end of the week. The final open book assessment week will take place between 6th-10th July. Mr Bamford has written separately to Year 10 and Year 12 parents and a copy of the letter can be found on the school website - <https://www.oaklandscatholicschool.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Open-Book-Assessment-Week-2-8th-12th-June.pdf>

School Website

In previous letters, I have signposted reminders to all the support services available for families. This was growing somewhat, so it has been omitted from this letter. All this information can also be found on the school website. <https://www.oaklandscatholicschool.org/coronavirus/>
We will start a new list next week.

Finally, the half-term holiday normally coincides with the Feast of Pentecost. I would like you to give this question serious consideration. If we had to forego the celebration of Christmas, Easter or Pentecost, which one would seem the least crucial? Most of us, myself included, would have a tough time picturing a year with no Christmas, or no Easter. Most of us, because of the cultural emphasis of the first two, would probably say, *"Well, if I must choose, I can do without Pentecost."* Absolutely not! The bottom line is that without Pentecost the other three would not be celebrated at all! It is Pentecost that enables the gift of faith by which we know that the birth, the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ are for us. Jesus was not finished when He rose from the dead and ascended to Heaven. He came back to give the greatest gift of all — the gift of His own Spirit to live in us.

Happy Pentecost at this difficult time.

Yours sincerely



Mr M Quinn
Headteacher