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Edith Stein Catholic Academy Trust
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)
Registered in England and Wales, Company No 07721932

Headteacher: Matthew Quinn B.Ed (Hons), M.A., NPQH

Our Ref: MQ/SM

31 December 2020

Dear Parents

No doubt you will have seen the announcement by the Secretary of State for Education that schools will not reopen as planned at the beginning of term. This is in response to the rapid rise of COVID-19 and the increased transmission rates of the new variant. As a result, we have had to change the plans developed just before Christmas.

The Senior Leadership Team met yesterday to discuss the school's response to the evolving situation.

Additional advice was provided to schools by the DfE around 7.00pm yesterday evening. Whilst this does provide some guidance, a number of significant questions are left unanswered, including the expectation for remote learning for non-exam groups for the week commencing 4th January. There also appears to be a shift in tone related to lateral flow testing, where the expectation is now that schools 'will start their programme of testing' during week commencing 11th January.

It is possible that schools will receive additional guidance over the Bank Holiday weekend. This leaves schools and families little time to prepare. So, I want to share as much as I can with you at this juncture.

Monday 4th January 2021

Before Christmas this was designated as an INSET day. This will remain in place. The school will be shut to students. There will be no online provision for students or in school provision for vulnerable children or students of critical workers. I will write separately about the provision for students of critical workers and you will be contacted by Mrs Oldroyd if your child falls into the 'vulnerable' category. In order to assist our planning and staffing arrangements for next week, we would appreciate early replies, no later than midday on Sunday 3rd January to these communications.

Tuesday 5th to Friday 8th January 2021

We will open to vulnerable pupils and children of key workers **only** and remote teaching will be provided for Years 11 and 13. For Years 7-10, remote learning will be published on Teams in core subjects of English, Maths, Science and RE. Year 12 will receive appropriate online learning tasks from their teachers.

All students will be expected to check in with their tutor between 9.00am and 9.20am Tuesday–Friday using the Teams 'chat' facility. This is so that a daily school routine is established and staff know that students are ready to work.

Week commencing Monday 11th January 2021

All students will receive remote learning. If during this week it is possible to start a programme of testing, prioritising staff, those students in exam cohorts will be brought back into school for face-to-face lessons. It is in this area that there is the least amount of clarity. We will update you on this nearer the time.

Week commencing Monday 18th January 2021

At this time, it is planned that all students will return to school for face-to-face lessons.

Lateral Flow Tests in School

On the cusp of the holiday, the Government made an announcement that lateral flow tests and PCR tests would be made available in school. Over the holiday more information and guidance has been made available to schools including confirmation of the delivery of the testing kits week commencing 4th January.

One of the critical elements to the success of this Government initiative is having enough volunteers on-hand to supervise students administering the tests then process and record the results. Tests will have to be carried out early in the morning between 7.30am and 9.30am and we are particularly interested in anyone who could volunteer who has a medical, clinical or lab technician background or high-level administrative skills with a recent DBS. If you would like to express an interest, please email me at headteacher@oaklandscatholicschool.org.

I will write again to all parents exploring some of the issues related to lateral flow tests on 4th January.

Free School Meals

The school Canteen will be closed for the week commencing 4th January and possibly the following week as well. As previously, students in receipt of free school meals will be issued vouchers. This process will commence upon return so there may be a slight delay before these are issued.

The fluidity and nature of the announcements from the Government makes it particularly difficult for school, staff and families. We continue to hold in our prayers all those who have been affected by COVID-19 over the holiday season. I apologise for having to write to you again over the holiday but I am sure you appreciate we are responding to a dynamic national and local situation.

With best wishes to you and your families for a happy New Year.

Yours sincerely



Mr M Quinn
Headteacher