

Oaklands Catholic School and Sixth Form College

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Our Ref: MQ/SM

15 January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

I would like to start by thanking you for all the support you have given this week in two areas. First for our Mass on Thursday in remembrance of Freddie Fincham; we had over 1250 views. We bombarded Heaven with our prayerful support for the repose of his soul and the consolation of his family in their time of grief. Second, with the remote learning since the start of the current lockdown. It was not quite the start of term we were all hoping for, but I have been impressed with student engagement and commitment to their learning. I want to particularly mention Year 11 and Year 13 students, who despite the announcement about the changes to the exams this summer, have continued to work hard – which is excellent considering the lack of information we have had. Some information has begun to trickle out, however we are still awaiting further guidance from Ofqual and as soon as we know more, we will share it with the school community.

Please remember that although school is closed to the majority of students, we are still here and available to support students and their families during this lockdown. For most families the first point of contact will be your child's form tutor. You will find lots of useful information on our Coronavirus Updates and Advice webpage.

Remote Learning

I have written to you before about the issues related to online remote learning. It is not a substitute for being in a classroom. There are a wide range of approaches to remote learning that schools can adopt or mix and match. Just as we see in the classroom, youngsters respond better to some approaches than others. This is reflected in the DfE expectations for remote education, which requires access to high quality online and offline resources. Schools will adopt different approaches depending on their students and comparisons between different schools cannot easily be made. At Oaklands, we understand that one year group will not necessarily receive the same offer as another. Schools are not legally required to deliver 'live' lessons, nor is there evidence that a teacher talking at students, live, for a lesson delivers higher quality outcomes. Remote learning does not always need to be online or 'live' to be impactful and real-time or live teaching is not always preferable to recorded material, online 'chat' support, or independent tasks. We aim to ensure that remote learning is blended and pitched right for the student and that the teacher gives feedback, challenging though this can be online. **Please be aware that whilst staff are at school working with students in provision it is difficult for them to conduct online live lessons at the same time.**

We continue to ask students for their feedback. Whilst many youngsters are managing very well, there are some that are finding the experience challenging for a variety of reasons. Your views on remote learning are important, so we have started to sample random groups of parents across Years 7-11. If you receive an email asking you to participate in a short survey your contribution will be greatly received as this will help us modify, where we can, the provision we offer.

Parents of Year 12/13 Students

If a student is not managing their workload at home and needs to come and safely work in the unruffled calm of the Sixth Form library, we are here to support them to do that. Year 13 especially need to commit fully to every piece of work set, so let Mrs Ludlam know if you need to work in college. All students who come in will be asked to complete a Lateral Flow Test (LFT) consent form and will be tested on their first morning and then again five days later using the LFT procedures in place for on-site staff and learners during lockdown.

Parents of Students in Year 9

All parents should have received a letter (by email) this week to inform them how the options process will operate this year and also their child's curriculum pathway for KS4. Early next week the options booklet will be emailed to parents and posted on the school website. The following week, a series of subject video postcards will be available to support the options process, plus guidance on how to enter option choices online via the SIMS App. If you have any subject specific questions, please contact the subject lead via the email address highlighted on the video postcard.

Collection of Certificates

Due to current circumstances, we were unable to celebrate students' achievements in our Presentation of Certificates Evening. When Year 12 students return to school we will ensure that all GCSE certificates are given to them. However, for any students (from Year 11 or Year 13 last year) who need access to these urgently, we ask you to email certificates@oaklandscatholicschool.org to arrange a time to collect the certificates from Reception.

Parents of Year 11 Applicants to Oaklands Sixth Form College September 2021

Offer letters have now been sent out through the post to all applicants. Our early deadline was 17th December 2020, so if you would like to be considered a late applicant for consideration please complete the application form in the usual way through the Sixth Form pages of the website, found here: [Microsoft Forms](#). Remember that applicants can change their options throughout this and next term by contacting with Mrs Ludlam in Sixth Form b.ludlam@oaklandscatholicschool.org

What Children and Young People Can and Cannot Do During the National Lockdown

It's important that we remember that the rules of a national lockdown also apply to children and young people. Whilst your child might have been, up until very recently, in a large school bubble, the rules around meeting up and socialising outside of school apply to secondary age youngsters. I appreciate that there is a tension here as students can mix if in a school setting. We know it's difficult and children and young people especially get bored; however, it's vital that we all stick to the rules to protect ourselves, our family and friends and to reduce infections in our communities. The sooner we can do this, the sooner everyone can return to some sort of normality.

Lateral Flow Tests

These started in school this week for staff and students in the on-site provision. My thanks to all the staff and volunteers, this is truly valiant work.

Vaccine Roll Out

It has been encouraging to hear from students when they report that older members of extended families have received the vaccine. The vaccine is clearly out there within the wider community. This is welcome news, and we should be hopeful for what this means for the future. However, there is a long road ahead of us and we must not drop our guard.

Keeping in Touch

If your child tests positive for COVID-19 or is otherwise unwell please do inform us using the normal absence procedures even if they are at home. This allows us to inform class teachers and Heads of Year who can offer support as appropriate, particularly if a child is too unwell to access their learning. The DfE require us to collate this information as part of our daily data return.

[Attendance - Oaklands Catholic School and Sixth Form College](#)

Finally, throughout this lockdown period, all the Oaklands staff will still be working to provide the very best education, care and guidance that we can, to all our students. In this challenging and difficult time, we will do everything in our power to support our young people so that we can come through this together.

Yours sincerely



Mr M Quinn
Headteacher