

15<sup>th</sup> January 2021

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Dear Parents and Carers

## ST JOHN'S MARLBOROUGH – COVID 19

As we come towards the end of the second week of term 3, I do hope that you and your family are all well. In this letter, I am pleased to be able to provide an update on a number of issues relating to St John's.

### Remote Learning provision

Many of you are writing to us with very positive comments about the provision that is in place. These comments are helpful in informing us of what is working well and where we need to make adjustments. We will run a more formal survey in due course but in the meantime, please let us know if you have any concerns or if there is anything you would like direct feedback on. Below are a number of points worth raising at this time:

- We are aware that students are sat in front of screens for at least 5 hours a day and often working in a very intense way. As a result, modifications to the amount of homework will be made and reasonable adjustments will take place to ensure students are able to cope effectively. We will also be issuing some guidance on how to take breaks effectively from the screen in due course. There will be more to follow on both of these areas soon.
- Attendance in the sessions is monitored through Classcharts and we are delighted with the levels of engagement. We understand too that IT issues within the home can cause issues at times, so please do not worry if your child is caught in a situation where they cannot log on. Our welfare and tutor teams will be contacting you as a matter of course to check up on students, but please do get in touch if we need to be aware of anything.
- We are reviewing the way we can develop break out rooms in online lessons which will enable tailored support to be provided even more effectively.

### Summer Exams

Many of you will be aware of the recent Government announcement which suggests there may well be some form of summer exam for students taking GCSEs and A levels this summer. A consultation is about to be run by the exams regulator Ofqual and we would warmly encourage parents and carers to take a moment to respond when it goes live. The link to the Ofqual website can be found [here](#) but we will endeavour to let you know when the window opens for feedback. In the meantime, we need Year 11 and 13 students to be working as hard as they would normally be doing at this time of year.

On this very subject, Amelia Ferris in Year 11 had a letter published by The Guardian this week which can be found [here](#).

## **Mass Testing for COVID-19**

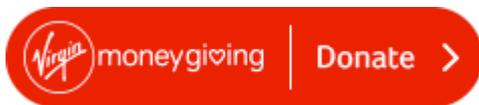
We remain mindful of this Government priority as well as the headlines in The Guardian yesterday relating to issues being raised by the regulatory bodies. I can confirm that a huge amount of work has been put into setting up the testing provision and we are extremely grateful to members of staff who have directed time and energy to try and meet the expectations. At the moment, our Sports Hall has been converted into a testing centre and looks like this in response to the Government expectations.



## **Fundraising for IT equipment for students**

We would like to thank both parents, carers and staff who have offered to donate money to help provide additional IT equipment for students. In response to pledge requests, we have launched a new fundraiser using Virgin Money Giving and any money raised will enable us to buy laptops, iPads, internet dongles and headphones to loan to our students who are struggling to access remote learning due to a lack of equipment.

We will run the campaign for another week and we are very grateful to all of you who have donated so far. Unfortunately, we are not able to accept donations of old IT hardware but we do appreciate everyone who wants to help try and make a difference. Please visit our website [here](#) for further information or click on the direct link below to visit the donations page.



## **Notification of confirmed or suspected COVID-19 cases**

Despite the lock down, it still remains vital you let the school know through the COVID-19 email - [covid-19@stjohns.excalibur.org.uk](mailto:covid-19@stjohns.excalibur.org.uk) if you have any pandemic related concerns we need to be aware of. This is particularly important if you need to take a test or have a positive case. We also continue to keep up to date our dedicated area on the school website which can be found at:

<https://www.stjohns.excalibur.org.uk/latest-covid-19-information/>.

We are fortunate enough to have an Academy Nurse at St John's who monitors these concerns regularly and the sooner we know, the sooner we can take action.

The Twitter feed and school website continue to be very useful ways of staying in touch with what St John's are doing in the community, so please follow that and re-tweet if you wish.

Communication between home and school remains as important as ever, and I do hope that both you and your children will feel able to contact us at anytime if you need to.

With kindest regards



**Mr I Tucker**  
**Principal**

