



19 June 2020

lrr/jcl/stj-covid-19-19062020

## ST JOHN'S MARLBOROUGH – COVID 19

Dear Parents and Carers

We have had a positive week at St John's with the highlight being the phased return to school for Year 10 and 12, along with an increasing number of keyworker students. Attendance has been very strong and the feedback from the students positive. All the changes to the site and grounds have meant that we have been able to comply effectively with the social distancing guidance and expectations; this has led to a feeling of confidence in St John's. It needed to be a good week as there has been an increase in the negativity towards schools and their role in progression out of the lockdown. As you might expect, we are now talking about what comes next.

I am very confident that the offer for our students is one of the best that I have seen in terms of state school provision. To that end I would like to publicly thank everyone who is making all this happen and to the students and families for their overwhelming engagement. GOVUK has given secondary schools the 'flexibility' to see how we might provide a face to face experience for other vulnerable students and to that end, I am hoping next week to be able to inform you of further plans. Please be aware that we will be making every effort to contact once again, all of our families in year 7 – 9 to catch up. This might well also provide an opportunity to give you further information out about future plans.

I would like to take this opportunity to address the debate about how we are supporting remote learning. A number of you are writing in saying you want more, many are saying provision is just right and some are saying there is too much. As a proud state school with a broad demographic composition, we have a challenge to be able to support all students as fairly as possible. The direct comparisons in the national conversation with what the private sector are doing have not been helpful and we have to be mindful that not all our students have access to sufficient IT in the home to make live learning the only way forward. I can however issue the following data which demonstrates how far we have come with this resource during the lockdown:

- 100% of our staff are using email to interact with students
- 93% of teachers are using Microsoft TEAMS
- 84% of teachers are doing live teaching or on demand lessons (pre-recorded)

This supplements what we are providing on Show My Homework but I need to be clear; nothing we make available remotely achieves the same outcomes as direct, face to face teaching contact. We have to hope that GOVUK gathers the confidence to be able to allow schools to open more and to be able to do that quickly. In short, we need our students back safely at the very earliest opportunity.

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This letter also provides me with an opportunity to thank those of you that write in with news and positive feedback. All of this is shared and some of the endeavour of the students has been posted on the COVID-19 area of the school website. Can I also draw your attention to the 'Granham Gazette' which has been published today and is the result of the hard work of our budding journalists in Year 10.

Please do continue to stay engaged with us and we appreciate hearing from you through the [covid-19@stjohns.excalibur.org.uk](mailto:covid-19@stjohns.excalibur.org.uk) email. 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/>. And as ever, I hope that you and your family are staying well.

With kindest regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ian Tucker'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'I'.

**Ian Tucker**  
**Principal**