



24 April 2020

lrrt/jcl/covid-19.24042020

## ST JOHN'S MARLBOROUGH – COVID 19

Dear Parents and Carers

As we complete the end of the first week of term 5, it is time for me to put together my weekly bulletin for you and to start, as always, with my best wishes and sincere hope that you and your families are all safe and well.

Since I last wrote to you, I hope there will have been a shift in the emphasis as to the way that the online learning is taking place for your son or daughter. The revised timetable for Key Stage 3 appears to be helping from the feedback we have received, and we are looking at doing something similar for Year 10. More faculties are experimenting using TEAMS to support and supplement what is being provided directly on Show My Homework and we will seek to develop that further as time goes on.

Below are a number of other developments and points I would like you to be aware of:

- We have contacted around 60% of all families directly now to touch base and check on wellbeing. We aim to have completed the whole Academy by this time next week so please do take these opportunities to let us know how things are going, what is working and what could be improved. This process has highlighted that one or two contact details for families have changed so please do let Kim Mathieson know on [k.mathieson@stjohns.excalibur.org.uk](mailto:k.mathieson@stjohns.excalibur.org.uk) but **only if you have changed contact numbers since September 2019.**
- As we move more towards an online system of learning for students, it seems appropriate that we encourage you to raise your awareness of online safety within the home. If you have any concerns whatsoever about this, then please do not hesitate to contact the school directly but in the meantime there is a very useful weblink here for you to follow up on: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/coronavirus-advice-support-children-families-parents/> and I really do recommend you watch this link.
- I just want to say a word or two about the upcoming Year 10 and 12 exam series. These are **only** to be seen as a way of measuring the focus for the revision that we have been asking these students to maintain. We realise that they are no substitute for formal exams and the teachers just need to use them as an assessment tool to work out what has been able to have been completed successfully whilst in lockdown and what the gaps may well be when we return. There is a national debate beginning to emerge about how the GCSE and A level may look next year, and I want St John's to be in a position to really inform that debate so that the best decisions are made going forwards for these students. The last thing any of us want is for undue stress and anxiety to be placed upon pupils so please try to encourage a measured response at home. Please inform subject teachers or the Heads of those years directly if you have specific concerns you want us to take into account. In the meantime, the personal delivery of Year 10 revision guides is underway, and I hope these provide some confidence and another helpful resource to students and families.

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- The plan for returning to school is constantly under review now as you can imagine. We hoped to hear something useful to work towards at the start of the week but so far, we have only heard what has come through on the news. I maintain my sincerest hope that we are back together at least for term 6 in some form (maybe sooner), but in the meantime it is really important that we stay in touch and keep on trying to motivate the students and look after their mental wellbeing as best we can. 'Low mood' is a phrase creeping in nationally now and one that we are updating our procedures on so do look out for further information about this from us.

As I always say, please do continue to stay engaged with what needs to be done at this challenging time. We appreciate the contact that we have had with you through the [covid-19@stjohns.excalibur.org.uk](mailto:covid-19@stjohns.excalibur.org.uk) email and we 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/>. The Twitter feed continues to be a very useful way of staying in touch with what St John's are doing in the community, to try and help and support national effort at this time.

It remains for me to say that I will be in touch again at the same time next week or as soon as any developments become clearer in terms of schools re-opening. The public health guidance remains the same and I appreciate your role in trying to make sure that you and your children comply, especially in beautiful weather! Please take care.

With kindest regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ian Tucker', written in a cursive style.

**Ian Tucker**  
**Principal**