



ST MARGARET WARD CATHOLIC ACADEMY



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01A/Tier2LocalCovid-19Restrictions/DM/LB

Friday 23th October 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

As I'm sure you will have heard by now Stoke-On-Trent has been placed into the Tier 2 of local Covid-19 restrictions; the high alert category. This is due to the rapid increase in reported cases over the last week and will take effect from midnight tonight. The Local Authority have asked schools to share the following key messages with all families as we approach the half term holiday. They are acting urgently to try to ensure the rate of transmission is reduced quickly.

Personal responsibility

We all need to do our bit to keep ourselves, family, friends and teachers safe. Everyone can help by;

1. Don't ignore symptoms

- If your child or anyone in your household has symptoms please inform the school straightaway and do not send your child into school.
- Book a test as soon as possible after symptoms start.
- Self-Isolate until your test results are known.
- When you know the result of your test please inform the school. During half term please inform us by email on pjohnson@smwca.org.uk.

2. Self-Isolation

You need to self-isolate if:

- You or anyone in your household (including support bubble) has Covid-19 symptoms.
- You or anyone in your household (including support bubble) is awaiting Covid-19 test results.
- You or anyone in your household (including support bubble) has tested positive.
- You have been notified that you are a contact of a positive case and been told to self-isolate.
- You have travelled into the UK from a high-risk country and need to quarantine.

Self-Isolation means you should not leave your home:

- Do not go to work, school or visit public places.
- Do not travel in a taxi or on public transport.
- Do not go out to exercise or to the park – you can exercise at home or in your garden.
- Do not go shopping – order online or ask someone else to drop it at your home.
- Do not have visitors in your home including friends and family (except for people providing essential care).
- Arrange a buddy support system with friends or family so if you need any help to self-isolate there are people who can help with shopping etc.

If you require this information in a different format, please contact the school.



3. Social Distancing & Rule of 6

- Follow the rules for high alert levels.
- Do not meet indoors with anyone beyond your household.
- Do not meet up with more than 6 people outdoors.
- Stay 2 metres apart from people you don't live with.
- Remember Hands – Face – Space.
- Wash hands regularly – Wear Face Coverings where social distancing is difficult – Keep your distance from those not in your household.

The move to Tier 2 will have minimal impact on schools. St Margaret Ward Catholic Academy will therefore reopen to all students after half term as planned on **Tuesday 3rd November**; the current timings of the day will remain unaffected apart from a minor change to the Year 11 lunch time.

The one significant change that does apply to schools, however, is that all staff students and visitors will be expected to wear face coverings in communal areas indoors, but not in classrooms. This comes into effect tonight and so all students, staff and visitors will be expected to bring and wear a face mask in school on their return from half term.

Please see the attached information regarding this for more details.

When I wrote to you in September, I said that it was only a matter of time until we had some confirmed cases in school and I'm surprised it took until Monday before we had any that required us to trace contacts and ask them to isolate. Most schools have not been as lucky. As a school we cannot control who contracts the virus outside of school but swift and responsible action by our parents and guardians can ensure the impact is limited in school. The fact that we have had so few confirmed cases requiring action is testament to the role you are playing in helping to keep other students and our staff safe and we are very grateful to you for this continued vigilance.

As we enter Tier 2 and approach the winter, with cases rising locally, I fear there will be more disruption after half term.

We continue to work hard to ensure that any confirmed cases will have minimal impact on students isolating. The approach of public health at present is very much about tracing contacts and avoiding sending home a year group unnecessarily and we have established systems to make the tracing process as effective as we can. Should there be any further confirmed cases after half term, and it's inevitable there will be, parents will be contacted directly if their child has been identified as a contact and needs to isolate. If you are not contacted directly you will still receive a message as a courtesy to keep you informed.

If your child needs to isolate for any reason after half term they should log on to Microsoft Teams and they will find work for each lesson that day. We continue to experiment with technology and live teaching and some isolating staff have taught lessons from home to full classes in school. Not all lessons, activities and classrooms lend themselves to live teaching but the lesson work and resources for every lesson, every day will be available so a student working from home should be able to follow their usual timetable for the day from home. Teachers are contactable during the lesson on Teams.

We were randomly selected for a visit from Ofsted on Tuesday and had the opportunity to spend the day discussing our processes, procedures, frustrations and successes with them which will contribute to national research into the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on education. It was interesting to hear from them how they are finding similar unexpected positive and negative consequences to us in schools across the country. The measures that have been imposed in schools have been designed to minimise (not eliminate) risk in order to keep staff, students and their households as safe as possible. They are not designed to improve the quality of education or ensure the smooth running of schools and they are not supported with any additional funding beyond limited catch-up funding. Therefore, I would like to also thank you for your patience, understanding and support as we do our best to follow the guidance

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and keep people safe. We are continually reviewing our approach and over the coming weeks we hope to be in a position to extend our provision of hot lunches to all students, more information will follow after half term.

I would also like to highlight that the changes we have made to comply with the guidance have significantly increased the pressure on our staff, however, they have adapted with a smile and done all they can to support our students and ensure the school is safe and calm. I can honestly say I am so proud to work with this great team of committed, caring (and exhausted) professionals.

Finally, I would like to end by thanking our students. They have been incredible since we returned in September; they have adapted brilliantly to returning to school after the extended school closures and have been focused and enthusiastic learners. During the day, the school is calm, focussed and purposeful and the staff are full of praises for the way the students have returned.

As we enter the Tier 2 local restrictions Sunday's Gospel reading from Matthew seems particularly appropriate. In it, we hear Jesus introduce the Golden rule; 'You must love your neighbour as yourself'. As we saw throughout the lockdown in the spring, in these times of uncertainty and anxiety we need to support and care for one another more than ever. We should consider how we would like to be treated, respected and kept safe and should therefore ensure we treat everyone we meet in the same way. Thank you for all you have done this term to help to keep us all safe. Please take care over half term and follow the guidance so that hopefully the transmission rates will begin to fall quickly and we will see an improving picture on our return.

Yours sincerely



Mr D McKenna
Principal

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VERY HIGH

HIGH

MEDIUM

LOCAL COVID ALERT LEVEL

HIGH

<p>Social Contact</p>  <p>1 household / bubble indoors. Rule of six outdoors.</p>	<p>Weddings and Funerals</p>  <p>Up to 15 guests for weddings and up to 30 guests for funerals. 15 for receptions, wakes and related ceremonies.</p>	<p>Overnight Stays</p>  <p>Overnight stays permitted subject to social contact rules.</p>	<p>Working from home guidance</p>  <p>Work from home where possible.</p>
<p>Shopping and Retail</p>  <p>Open.</p>	<p>Leisure and gyms</p>  <p>Open.</p>	<p>Hospitality</p>  <p>Open with some restrictions including 10pm closing time and table-service only.</p>	<p>Entertainment and tourist attractions</p>  <p>Open, except nightclubs and adult entertainment.</p>
<p>Education</p>  <p>Schools, FE colleges open. Universities must reflect wider restrictions.</p>	<p>Healthcare Services</p>  <p>Open.</p>	<p>Residential Care</p>  <p>Closed to external visitors other than in exceptional circumstances.</p>	<p>Travel and Transport</p>  <p>May continue to travel to open venues, but reduce number of journeys where possible. Avoid travel into Local COVID Alert Level Very High areas where possible.</p>
<p>Sporting Activity</p>  <p>Organised sport / licensed physical activity allowed in outdoor settings. Indoor organised sport must follow social contact rules (other than youth or disabled sport).</p>	<p>Worship</p>  <p>Open, subject to social contact rules.</p>	<p>Childcare</p>  <p>Registered and wraparound childcare. Supervised activities permitted in private homes. Children's groups permitted. Childcare bubbles for under 14s.</p>	<p>Youth Clubs and Activities</p>  <p>Permitted.</p>

There are three simple actions we must all do to keep on protecting each other:

-  **Wash hands** keep washing your hands regularly
-  **Cover face** wear a face covering in enclosed spaces
-  **Make space** stay at least 2 metres apart - or 1 metre with a face covering or other precautions

For more information and detailed guidance visit:
[gov.uk/coronavirus](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus)

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