



# ST MARGARET WARD CATHOLIC ACADEMY



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Principal: Mr. D. McKenna B.Soc.Sc. MA. PGCE. NPQH.

01A/ReturnToSchool/DM/ES

24<sup>th</sup> February 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

As you are probably aware, all schools have been asked to reopen from Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March. We are delighted to be able to welcome our students back into the building and we are keen to do this as quickly and safely as possible. Schools have been given the opportunity to do this in a flexible way to complete the first round of testing of all students before they return to classes. A brief overview of the timetable is as follows;

|                       | <b>Appointments for Testing</b>  | <b>Return to lessons in school</b> |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>Year 12 and 13</b> | Friday 5 <sup>th</sup> March     | Monday 8 <sup>th</sup> March       |
| <b>Year 11</b>        | Monday 8 <sup>th</sup> March     | Tuesday 9 <sup>th</sup> March      |
| <b>Year 10</b>        | Monday 8 <sup>th</sup> March     | Tuesday 9 <sup>th</sup> March      |
| <b>Year 9</b>         | Tuesday 9 <sup>th</sup> March    | Wednesday 10 <sup>th</sup> March   |
| <b>Year 8</b>         | Tuesday 9 <sup>th</sup> March    | Wednesday 10 <sup>th</sup> March   |
| <b>Year 7</b>         | Wednesday 10 <sup>th</sup> March | Thursday 11 <sup>th</sup> March    |

The children that have been attending school throughout lockdown will be tested on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> March whilst they are in school and will continue to attend school from Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March as they have been doing since early January. The timings of the school day will revert to the staggered times that operated throughout the autumn term. Remote learning will continue until students return to the classroom.

### Testing for Covid-19 in School.

For us to successfully open it is essential that we can test as many students as possible. Whilst participation in the testing programme is voluntary, full participation would significantly help to reduce the number of students being asked to isolate in the future. Along with the other protective measures we are taking, these tests will help staff and students to remain in school safely. Up to one third of people who have coronavirus experience no symptoms. Keeping the virus under control is the only way that we will see an end to the restrictions that we are currently living under. Please **give your consent for testing**, if you have not already done so, by clicking on this link:

[https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=cR09M0500k-9YrJ2K9q9YwnZU2\\_7CqBEolodcKXJesZUNVRTVzIQtkJPQkYxNjc0MVZFVFg1SjJGNS4u](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=cR09M0500k-9YrJ2K9q9YwnZU2_7CqBEolodcKXJesZUNVRTVzIQtkJPQkYxNjc0MVZFVFg1SjJGNS4u)

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



Please complete the consent form by the end of the day on **Monday 1<sup>st</sup> March**. If you encounter any difficulties in doing this please email our school office. Those in sixth form can give their own consent. Once we have the consent forms returned we will be in touch regarding how to book the first test for your child.

Testing will be supervised by trained staff. The 'lateral flow' tests are quick and easy using a swab of your nose and throat. We have been testing key worker pupils and staff in school since January, so we have an experienced testing team in place to enable this to run as smoothly as possible.

The results (which take around half an hour from testing) will be shared directly with staff and pupils participating. There will be 3 tests in total conducted by the school. Following these your child will be provided with an 'at home kit' and they will be expected to test themselves at home weekly. Further instructions will follow when we send these kits home.

### **What happens if the test is positive in school?**

If your child tests positive they will be isolated, and you will be contacted immediately. Ideally, we would ask that you collect them as quickly as possible but in extreme circumstances we have been told that a child can make their own way home if they do not use public transport and you give permission.

### **What happens if the test is negative in school?**

They will be able to stay in school and resume their activities as normal. A pupil will only be told if they test positive on a 'lateral flow' test, so if you do not hear you can assume it was negative. A small number of pupils may need to repeat the test if the first test was invalid or void for some reason.

### **What if my child develops symptoms or tests positive with an 'at home kit'?**

The testing programme at school is for people with no symptoms. If your child develops symptoms at any time (such as a high temperature; a new, continuous cough; or a loss or change to their sense of smell or taste) **they must immediately self-isolate, and book a test by calling 119 or visiting <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>**. They must also remain at home if they receive a positive result from the 'at home kit' or if anybody in the household tests positive for Covid-19.

The **rules around isolation following a positive test** remain the same. If a positive lateral flow test is returned you must isolate for 10 days from the test result. We will still have to send close contacts home where they are identified, and they will have to isolate for 10 days. Work will be provided for any student forced to isolate through track and trace. This will be set through MS Teams and will be either an assignment or access to a live lesson. Only students who have been told to isolate, through track and trace, will be given access to this work as all other students must be in school.

### **Compulsory Mask Wearing in School**

In addition to testing, the **wearing of masks when in any part of the building is now compulsory**. All students should bring two masks to school – one to wear and a spare. They should also **bring a plastic bag (sandwich bag or similar) in which they can store a used mask**. We fully appreciate that this will not be comfortable for staff or students but, whilst we are still vulnerable to the infection rate rising again, the government have made this an essential part of reopening the school. The only exemptions to this are students with serious special needs or health conditions that are recognised in an Education Health Care Plan or similar.

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We will be expecting **full school uniform** on return. Please ensure that students conform to school rules regarding hair, footwear and makeup.

**Attendance at school is mandatory**, as set out in government guidance. This will be staggered for year groups from Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March when attendance will be monitored through the usual school processes. Students who have a serious medical condition, and who have been asked to shield, will continue to learn from home until they are told that it is safe to return to school. This will not affect their attendance.

**Examination year groups and classes.** We are still waiting for further information about how these will be moderated by the exam boards. We will send further details once all these arrangements have been confirmed.

The announcement by the Prime Minister on Monday offers some hope of a gradual return to a life without restrictions and we cannot wait to welcome our students back into school. We will continue to communicate information updates as we receive them and please be assured that we are doing everything we can to support your child through this challenging time. I know that many are looking forward to being back but for some this may feel overwhelming. Please be assured that we are taking a cautious and stepped approach to help our students feel as safe as possible.

We fully understand how concerned some of you must be feeling about the current situation, but I can reassure you that we are doing all we can to keep our school as safe as possible for your child. Our full risk assessment and guidelines are available on our school website:

<https://stmargaretward.co.uk/coronavirus-updates/communication/>

Please contact us if you need this information in any other language or format or if you have any questions. You can contact the office by email [office@smwca.org.uk](mailto:office@smwca.org.uk)

Yours faithfully

Mr D McKenna  
**Principal**

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