

July 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

We have reached the end of an academic year which we can never have foreseen at the outset. It has been a very challenging time at many levels for our pupils, staff and for you as parents but together, overall, I think we have all done this very successfully.

As I promised at the start of the week I need to update you on a number of important things including our plans for September.

1. End of Year Report

We have reintroduced a more text based report at the end of this academic year which a number of parents have requested.

Peculiar to such a significant change, at a time when we have faced particular other new logistical challenges and using a new online system, I am conscious that there may be some errors that have slipped through our quality assurance checks which we will be happy to amend. I apologise in advance should this have occurred. All being well we will not be facing this current situation at the same time next year.

We are introducing electronic access to these reports and below I have included your personal password

Paper letters have individual login information.

which you can use to login and read your child's report at smcc.pupiltracking.com .

Term dates 20-21 and calendar

In the light of the current situation there are there no current changes to the planned term dates for 2020-21 to the ones we shared with you in recent weeks. They are available on the college website.

We have a provisional more detailed calendar of events for next year but have decided to pause sharing it with you until as early as possible in the new academic year. By then we hope it will be clearer how and when events such as Parents' Evenings and Review Days May be possible.

Similarly, we are considering carefully what if any extracurricular activities may be possible next year and whether for example any trips can happen.

2. Start date (s) in September

The government guidance regarding a safe return for all pupils was released on 3rd July and we have spent the time since planning on how we can implement it as safely as possible given the size of our school population and the physical layout of our buildings. After careful consideration of a wide range of possible solutions we have identified the new routines we will need to implement in September which are

based on what we are referring to as Year bubbles. The bubbles are defined areas for each year group within our school which pupils will only leave at limited times to access specialist teaching resources not available in a standard classroom e.g. PE, DT etc.

In order to maintain the Sixth Form curriculum, Year 12 and 13 students will have a bespoke timetable to allow them to access specialised areas and teaching at all times.

For this to work safely and efficiently we will need to train our staff and our pupils in these new routines and so have set aside time for this as follows.

The start of the new academic year will be as follows:

1st September Staff Inset Day including training on new bubble routines.

2nd September Years 7 and 12 only Induction including bubble routines

3rd September Year 7 plus Years 8 and 10 only including bubble routines' training

4th September Year 7 plus Years 9, 11 and 13 including bubble routines' training

7th September All year groups in school in their respective bubbles

Bubble entry points

We are adjusting entrance points to the building to support social distancing.

Different year groups will enter the site through different perimeter gates.

So that all pupils are clear on their bubble entrance, on each year groups first day back they will enter the site through what they know as the current main entrance and gather as separate year groups on the yard/GRA but after their training day will enter and leave through their identified year entry and exit gate, which will be the one closest to their year bubble.

Same start and end time of the college day

The timings and structure of the day will change for different year groups during the day but it will operate within the same time parameters i.e. school will start at 8.30 am and finish at 2.50pm. This is because we are unable to alter the bus and train services, on which many of our pupils depend, to get to and from school. We will stagger departure slightly at the end of the day but only to allow pupils to arrive more gradually at buses and trains.

Transport arrangements and face masks

At this point can I draw your attention to the current government guidance that anyone over the age of 11 must wear a face mask while travelling on public transport. Current government advice is that pupils and staff do not need to wear a face mask inside the school site and buildings. Pupils will be able to dispose of single use face masks safely on entering the site and fold away and store reusable ones themselves.

If pupils are travelling to school on bikes, there will be places to leave them on the entrance to their respective bubbles but they must be locked and secured by the pupils.

Respective year group daily timings

Given the significant unique details of the arrangements for each of the seven year groups and the need to talk them through carefully whilst on site, I have not included them all in this letter but I want to reassure you that they have undergone comprehensive scrutiny including from our external Health and Safety consultants.

Catering arrangements

As you can imagine, this is proving a complex issue for all schools. At the moment our plans are as follows:

Before school

Pupils will not be allowed in the canteen before school as this would mix pupils from different year group bubbles which our plans are designed to limit. Consequently, there will be no pre-school breakfast offer in the canteen.

At morning break

Sixth Formers will be permitted to go out of the college at break time.

Lunch

Sixth Formers will be able to order "Grab Bags" from the canteen to eat upstairs in the Sixth Form Area. They are also permitted to buy lunch outside of college.

Drinking Water

The guidance we have received is that we should disconnect water fountains which require pupils to drink directly from them. We have done this.

Therefore, we would encourage you to provide your child with a reusable/refillable water bottle which we can facilitate topping up during the day. There will be bottled water on sale in school.

Toilets

We will explain which and when (unless there is an emergency) each year group bubble can use their designated toilets as part of their year group induction day. These toilets will be cleaned and maintained throughout the day.

3. Uniform and Equipment requirements

Our uniform continues to be a source of great pride and your ongoing support is much appreciated. There are no changes to uniform requirements this year.

As detailed in my recent update the current government advice is that there is no need to alter school uniform requirements or for these to be washed more regularly.

I have included a link below to the website where all of the details of our uniform requirements are included and the local suppliers who stock it are listed. Please get in touch if you require a hard copy.

<https://stmaryswallasey.com/uniform/>

It is essential that all pupils are well equipped for lessons so that we can minimise the need to borrow or share resources. They need a pencil case with black or blue ink ballpoint pens, pencils, a sharpener, a rubber, a ruler, a protractor and compass, some colouring pencils and a scientific (natural display) calculator. As mentioned above, pupils also need to bring water in a refillable water bottle in with them.

Please remind your child that fizzy drinks and energy drinks are not allowed in school.

4. Attendance

In recent weeks it has been great to see so many of Year 10 and 12 pupils in school who have told us how happy they are to be back. We are also conscious that some have said they would rather carry on with home learning until September which, to this point, has been possible. However, in September remaining at home is not an option. The government is clear that all pupils need to be in school in September and we agree.

If you feel that you need support in getting your child back into school please get in touch so we can help.

5. Up-to-date contact details, Pupil Names and Medical information and medicines

It is obviously really important that we have correct contact details for parents and carers and the correct legal and given names and surnames for pupils (as these will be reflected on examination certifications). If there have been any changes or you think we don't have your email address, please contact the school office at schooloffice@stmaryswallasey.com

We also must have in-date medication for pupils in line with our medication policy, which is available on our website. Please contact the school office or pupils' pastoral teams if there is prescribed medication that pupils need to take at school. Any inhalers must be named and in date, kept in the pupils' bag with a spare in the medical room.

6. Recovery curriculum

We are conscious that the last few months' experiences will have been very different for all our pupils and that we will need to plan carefully to sensitively assess where children are at both academically and emotionally on their return. I can reassure you that we will not be just ploughing on as though nothing has happened and our staff have been preparing for the adjustments we will need to make. In fact the government has said that they do not expect a return to the full curriculum before summer term 2021.

Please be reassured that this does not mean pupils will not be doing meaningful learning in the period in between but rather that we can adjust our curriculum to ensure that pupils are in the best position to access the full curriculum given all that has happened.

Public examinations in 2021

We are conscious that there will be particular concerns for those taking public examinations in summer 2021. We are awaiting the outcomes of a current Ofqual consultation as to what may change in the light of the disruption. We will be in touch separately in the new academic year to share how we are responding to the outcomes when they are published.

Finally for now!

I am conscious that this is a long missive but I felt that it was important that you had enough information to feel reassured that we have already and continue to think deeply and plan meticulously for the year ahead.

Please do encourage your child to look at our End of Year Celebration video on our social media platforms. There is still so much to celebrate in these most unusual of times.

I am very proud of the response and resilience of our pupils and the creativity and determination of our staff to ensure that we continue to be a family centred community.

Hopefully we can all return safely in September and embrace the challenges of the new academic year having enjoyed some welcome sunshine and rest.

Yours sincerely

Mr A Boyle
Headteacher