



Friday 10th July

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope that you and your families are well. I am writing to provide an update since my last letter (dated 24th June). We have enjoyed seeing the Year 10 and Year 12 students who have attended sessions in school, and we look forward to the meetings and phone discussions with students in Years 7 - 9.

Return to school in September

There is a clear expectation from the government that all students will return to school in September and that attendance will be compulsory. We are working through the DfE guidance and creating a provisional plan for the first half term initially, knowing that there could be further changes during the summer holiday. One of the key intentions is to avoid students from different year groups mixing as far as possible and minimising movement around the school. This is why the DfE have proposed Year Group 'bubbles' and what this means in practical terms is that students will remain in one teaching group and classroom for most of their subjects with the exception of GCSE and A Level specialist subjects. Year group classrooms will be in separate 'zones' within the school. As you can probably imagine, this is complex to organise and we are working hard to ensure the safety of staff and students, whilst providing a positive learning experience for students when they return to school. There will be more detailed instructions provided for each year group at a later stage but I wanted to make you aware that there may be changes to the start and end of the school day to enable staggered year group dismissal. Year 7 will start on Wednesday 2nd September and come to school each day. We realise that all students will need to 're-familiarise' themselves with school and adapt to the new school environment. For this reason, we will be having the following year groups in school for a session with their form tutors on the following days:

- Year 8: Thursday 3rd September, 9 - 11.30 a.m.
- Year 10: Thursday 3rd September, 12.30 - 3.00 p.m.
- Year 11: Friday 4th September, 9 - 11.30 a.m.
- Year 9: Friday 4th September, 12.30 - 3.00 p.m.

The session will include timetable arrangements and expectations regarding behaviour, health and safety. The whole school will be in lessons from Monday 7th September. Students in Year 7 - 11 will be expected to wear full school uniform. Arrangements for the Sixth Form will be in a separate letter.

Staffing Update

St. Mark's has been blessed to have retained experienced and committed members of staff and they have all contributed to the success of the school. Sadly this year, we have several members of staff who are retiring. Mrs Cramer, Subject Leader for Media Studies is retiring after 15 years in the school and during that time she has established an outstanding department. Dr Callaghan, Deputy Headteacher is retiring after 16 years. Dr Callaghan has been responsible for leading several areas of the school including Catholic life and staff development. We are pleased that he will return to teach Politics part-time, and I am personally grateful to him for his wisdom and support since I became Headteacher.

The following two members of staff deserve separate recognition. They are both retiring after 29 years of service and commitment to the school. Mr Alexander, Deputy Headteacher has made an enormous contribution to the development of the school. His influence can be seen in several areas, and his relentless drive and passion has undoubtedly led to the outstanding examination results that St. Mark's students have achieved over the years. Mr Rogers is retiring as Subject Leader for Geography. His passion and commitment for Geography has shaped the outstanding department that we have today and I am sure that his former students will all cherish the memories from Geography field trips. Miss Stewart (maths), Mrs Duguid Farrant (RE) and Ms Giraud (Technology) are also leaving to pursue travel and other opportunities. We wish them all good health and happiness in the future.

In September, Mrs McGinty will become Deputy Headteacher at St. Mark's. Mrs McGinty is currently Assistant Headteacher at Chalfonts Community College in Buckinghamshire and she is looking forward to being part of our community. Mr Monaghan will also join the Senior Leadership Team and become Assistant Headteacher (Head of Sixth Form) and Miss O'Connell will become Director of Pastoral Care.

We will be writing to year groups separately next week regarding reports and arrangements for GCSE and A Level results days, and we will finalise arrangements for September as soon as possible.

Wishing you God's blessing on your families.

Yours faithfully,



Ms A. Waugh-Lucas,
Headteacher