



1st March 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

Re: National Lockdown Week 7 Update

Firstly, a very warm welcome to the newest members of our St James' family who will be joining us as Year 7 in September. Today they will receive their offer letter confirming their place at our school. We look forward to meeting them in due course and working with them to achieve their very best over the next five years. The admissions round this year has been phenomenal, for the first time in five years the total number of applications to St James' has increased dramatically. For the previous five years there has been a steady decline in applications due to a number of factors not limited to but including competition from other local High Schools and the opening of local Free Schools. This year, however, has seen a bounce back to a number not seen since 2016. This is testament to the work and dedication of the whole St James' family including highly effective teaching and learning, the effective wrap around care and pastoral system, and the leadership and Governance of the school. I want to thank you as parents directly, as the increase in applications shows clear faith in the direction that the school is moving in and that St James' is the school of choice in our community.

Last week was, as predicted, a week of numerous announcements from the Government, the Department for Education (DfE) and Ofqual. On Monday they released the full guidance for the wider re-opening of schools, on Wednesday they published information surrounding additional funding for the catch-up provision and on Thursday they released more information on how examination grades will be awarded to our Year 11 students.

For the awarding of examination grades, we now know the bare bones of what the process will look like, but we are still awaiting information from the exam boards so that we can dig further into the detail. This was the latest from the DfE on that particular point: "to support teachers in making their judgements, exam boards will provide detailed guidance before the end of the spring term", the end of spring term is four weeks away. As ever, as soon as we receive further clarity I will be in touch. Dr Guscott will be writing to Year 11 parents this week outlining what the Easter assessments timetable will look like, we have carefully planned this to straddle the Easter break to support the well-being of our Year 11 students whilst still allowing essential assessment to take place.

A final reminder that today is the last day to either a) give consent for your child(ren) to be tested or b) confirm that you do not give consent for your child(ren) to be tested. **You must respond to one of the links** available within the [letter sent on the 25th February](#). It is important that you have read and understood and ensured that your child has read and understood all of the items within this letter. Finally, on testing, if your child has had a positive Covid-19 test from a PCR test **after December 8th 2020** please email our School Business Manager, Mrs Doherty (j.doherty@stjamesheadle.co.uk) and include the date of the positive test, their name, year and form group as **they will be exempt from the lateral flow test due to their recent positive Covid-19 test.**

We look forward to welcoming our children back as per the dates below. A reminder that any child who does not have consent for a lateral flow test should return to school in line with the phased return arrangements below:



ST JAMES'

CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

Monday 8th March	Year 11
Tuesday 9th March	Year 10
Wednesday 10th March	Year 9
Thursday 11th March	Year 8
Friday 12th March	Year 7

The testing centre will be open from 8am each day with Form time as normal at 8.45am.

Following this week's Gospel of the transfiguration of Jesus where we hear the voice of God for the second time, the Shrewsbury Youth Mission Team are leading *Explore Lent* on YouTube, live from St. Peter's Church, Hazel Grove. It will be streamed on the SYMT [YouTube](#) channel from 7.20pm on 3rd March. I ask you to encourage your child to watch this as part of their Lenten journey.

Sadly, in recent weeks in particular, we have had a number of staff, children and parents affected directly by this pandemic. Please continue to keep all members of our St James' family who have suffered bereavements or illness in your thoughts and prayers at this time. If your child requires any support in dealing emotionally with the effects of this pandemic, please do not hesitate to contact their Form Tutor or Head of Year.

If you need us, you know where we are headteacherpa@stjamesheadle.co.uk

Yours faithfully

Mr A Pontifex
Headteacher