



12th May 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

Re: Coronavirus update 12th May

Following the public broadcast from the Prime Minister on Sunday 10th May I wanted to update you on several points.

Firstly, it now appears that the majority of students will not be returning to St James' until September at the earliest. We are **planning** for the return of our Year 10 students in some way towards the end of June or start of July.

This is an extremely unusual situation which has resulted in a loss of learning time for our students. We have to work on a way forward taking into consideration the wellbeing of our whole school community. We have been using our Show My Homework platform as a way of staff setting work for our students to complete at home. As we move forward this will continue for all year groups. I would like to stress that your children can upload their work to Show My Homework or email it directly to teachers should you wish them to receive feedback, from their teachers, on their work. All students should be completing the work set on Show My Homework, but we understand that we must be flexible and therefore there is no requirement to submit work for feedback.

We have looked into using video technology through platforms such as Zoom or Microsoft teams however we have taken the decision that it is not viable. As I am sure you can appreciate, as Headteacher I must balance the needs of our students with the physical and mental wellbeing of my staff. We currently have staff who have bereavement in their families, staff who are unwell with symptoms of Covid-19 and staff who are currently providing childcare for their own children during the day making the use of video technology near impossible.

One of my biggest concerns during this unprecedented time is the safety and mental wellbeing of our students. Over the next two weeks your child's form tutor or another teacher will be in contact to check in with your child. This conversation will take place over the phone and involve a discussion of how your child is progressing with their work, their mental wellbeing and if anyone within the household has been unwell. These will then begin to happen every two weeks.

Following the Government advice, we are currently ensuring that the school is ready for when our students return. We have begun the process of adding social distancing markers, ensuring high levels of cleanliness and preparing a timetable for students in Year 10. For the foreseeable future parents and visitors will not be permitted on site and we are currently assessing the logistics around events that would normally be taking place during the autumn term.

I would like to thank those parents who have been in touch with staff and myself to pass on their good wishes and thanks during this challenging time. Please do keep all of the St James' community in your prayers.

Yours faithfully

Mr A Pontifex
Headteacher