



# Holy Cross

CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

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HEADTEACHER **Mr I Gaughan BA**

July 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian

As we come to the end of the strangest school year any of us have ever seen, I write to update you on a number of aspects of school life and operation.

### **Hello and Goodbyes**

We say fond farewells to a number of colleagues who are moving on this summer: Miss Cunliffe (TA); Mrs Whittle (TA); Miss Kelly (RE); Mr Ackroyd (Head of PE); Mr Power (Head of Science) is leaving after 19 years of dedicated service; Mr McFarlane is retiring after 10 years as Deputy Headteacher and more recently Head of School. It is sad that we cannot say goodbye to these colleagues in the way we would like but I know you will echo my thanks for all they have done for our children and wish them well in the next stages of their lives.

In September we welcome some new colleagues: Miss Burton (RE), Mr Greener (PE), Miss Hopwood (History), Miss Lowe (Science) and Mrs Ross (Science).

### **Year 11 Results and resits**

Due to continued restrictions on large gatherings we are unable to do results day as normal. Instead GCSE results will be emailed before 9.00 am on Thursday 20 August 2020. Mrs Dawson (Examinations Officer) will send a letter in the next few days detailing what you have to do to access them. I know this is yet another missed opportunity for Year 11 to get together. It is not what I or any of our staff want either. I can only reiterate that we will bring the year group together for a celebration of their time at Holy Cross when we can.

Good luck Year 11.

The government have indicated that there will be a full series of 'resits' available in the Autumn term for those pupils whose results are not what they want them to be. My strong advice is not to resit any subjects unless you have to. If a pupil has got on the course or apprenticeship that they wanted, their focus should be on that. There won't be any teacher input for these 'resits' and preparing for them will take time away from studying for sixth form and college courses. We will, of course, offer individual advice where it is wanted. Detailed guidance about the release of Centre Assessed Grades and rank orders is still being prepared. We cannot release this information before results day. Further details will be sent out to you in due course. Phone lines will be open for results queries only on results day.

### **Buildings Update**

While school has been partially closed we have done a great deal of maintenance work. There have,

and will continue to be, upgrades to ICT provision. The serving area of the canteen has been refitted to allow for a faster, more efficient service. The plans for extending the main hall/dining area into the quad are still going ahead. Unfortunately due to Coronavirus and funding delays the work will not restart till the autumn and should be completed by January.

### **School Trips and Refunds**

We are aware of our obligation to refund monies for cancelled trips and have already sent refunds where we have had the monies refunded to us. We will refund all monies for cancelled trips. We are having an issue with one travel company and we have put the matter in the hands of the school's solicitor. As soon as this is resolved, monies will be refunded. In the meantime, I thank you for your patience and forbearance.

### **Summer Closure**

School has only completely closed for five days since February. We are going to close fully over the summer. Reception will reopen for enquiries on Monday 24 August. Any other queries can be sent by email.

We know that the majority of our pupils have worked really hard over lockdown. They need a rest and we don't expect any school work to be done over the break. All subject areas are preparing recovery curricula for September to address any gaps which have appeared through remote learning.

### **September Opening**

We will open for all pupils in September. To facilitate new routines for safety we will have a staggered start:

**Wednesday 2 September – Year 7 Only (this should be an Inset Day)**

**Thursday 3 September – Year 7, 10 and 11**

**Friday 4 September – All Years**

A great deal of work is currently being done to plan for reopening in line with government guidelines.

Our principles for this are:

- minimising pupil mixing
- ensuring a full curriculum offer to all pupils
- keeping it simple, manageable and sustainable

To affect this:

- each year group will be taught in a 'bubble' zone with its own entrance, outdoor space and toilets
- all year groups will have access to specialist teaching areas like Music, PE, Drama, Food, DT, ICT and Art. Pupils will only move for those subjects
- all rooms will have sanitizer and enhanced cleaning practices will be introduced
- specialist rooms will be sanitized after use by a 'bubble'
- lunches will be delivered to classrooms or pupils can bring their own packed lunch. They will then go to their designated outdoor area

Due to the number of pupils who arrive by bus we will not have staggered starts and finishes. This would also prevent us from timetabling specialist teachers and therefore reduce quality of curriculum delivery.

'Bubbles' are by necessity permeable due to siblings and social activity outside school's control. As a school we can reduce movement to reduce mixing which is what we will do.

Some policies will have to be amended; we will publish addendums to policies including safeguarding and behaviour. To keep pupils and staff safe we will have to be stricter about disobedience and defiance, reviewing sanctions to comply with government guidelines. Our priority will be keeping children safe.

I will write to you in August with more details including policy amendments. The plans outlined above are at a formative stage and subject to change. There will be a government briefing about education on 11 August so it would be unwise to finalise plans before that.

### **ParentPay**

If you have not already signed up to ParentPay I would ask you to do so because from September we will no longer be able to accept cash or cheques payments. Pay Point letters are available on request for individual activities. If you have mislaid your registration details, which were sent out by letter some time ago, please email and a duplicate letter will be issued.

### **Uniform**

Our uniform rules and expectations will be as normal in September. The uniform requirements are available on the school website along with details of suppliers. As usual, please don't allow your children to have extreme haircuts including unnatural colours or piercings towards the end of the summer as this will cause them problems when they come back into school.

### **The Bowers and Burgh Lane**

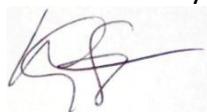
Could I ask that parents dropping off and picking up children use the Myles Standish Way entrance. The other school entrances are for pedestrians only and increased traffic around those areas is a danger to pupils.

### **And finally**

This has been a difficult period for everyone; pupils, parents, school staff alike. I am extremely grateful for the hard work, resilience and kindness of all members of the Holy Cross community. September almost certainly won't be 'normal' but it will be moving in the right direction and I know that we will deal calmly and effectively with whatever happens putting, as we always do, our children first.

On behalf of the governors and staff I thank you for your continued support. I hope you find some peace and joy over the summer break and we will see you in September.

Yours sincerely



Mr I Gaughan  
Headteacher