**St Mark’s Catholic School**

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24th June 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope that you and your families are keeping well. We have less than four weeks left until the end of the Academic Year and we are disappointed that we are unable to have all students back in school. There is also uncertainty about what will happen in September. We have been planning with the expectation that students may have to attend school on a rota or part-time basis if social distancing remains, however the Government announcement on Friday suggested that all students from all year groups would be back full time in September. We are awaiting the further guidance that is expected within the next two weeks.

We all came into education to make a difference and at St Mark’s we are committed to ensuring all fulfil their God given potential. Teaching and learning is very challenging in this situation, and I am very grateful for the staff who have worked hard to deliver lessons remotely, supervised the increasing numbers of children in school and provided pastoral support to students. We really miss our students and look forward to welcoming them all back so that we can provide the full support that they need. Please remind your children that all communication with students is through Google Classroom and their school gmail account. They must check this during the day to avoid missing important information. Many parents have also looked at the Google Classrooms with their child and this enables them to see the work and resources available. The school assembly will be available each week and there are wellbeing resources each Wednesday.

**Year 11 Students**

Congratulations to the 55 students in Year 11 who have successfully completed the Creative Problem Solving course run by Eton College. The course helped students come up with  innovative ideas, to craft those ideas and apply them in their own lives. They developed their skills in creative expression, both verbally and visually and learnt how to see problems from different perspectives. Well done!

Year 11 students are encouraged to make full use of the transition materials that are available to help them to prepare for A Level study.

**Year 10 and Year 12 students**

Last week we arranged meetings in school/phone discussions with all Year 10 and Year 12 students. It was wonderful to have so many students in school and the feedback from staff and students was very positive. It was also reassuring that the overwhelming majority of students have been adjusting to remote learning despite the challenges.

Over the next few weeks we will be having  Year 10 and Year 12 students into school for some much needed face to face contact. There has been separate communication with parents providing further information. As you can imagine, this is complex to arrange and each school will have created a plan based on their site, numbers of students and staff availability. We are only able to have 25% of the Year 10/12 cohort on site and they have to be in small groups due to social distancing and the size of the classrooms.

The latest guidance suggests that there will be external assessment for GCSE and A Level next year, but we have no further information about the timing or nature of the assessment. Please be assured that our teachers will work tirelessly to ensure that all students are fully prepared, and that any gaps in knowledge and understanding are addressed.

**KS3 students**

We are disappointed that we are unable to have KS3 students in school, however we will be making contact with all students before the end of term. Further information will be available in due course, but this may be a meeting in school or a phone discussion. The purpose of this contact will be to see how things are going, identify any need for further support and provide guidance for the summer holidays.

**St. Mark’s Commitment to Racial Justice**

The Black Lives Matter movement has highlighted the need for change in order to address the injustice in the world.  As a community, we understand the urgency with which we need to work, to seize this moment in time, to take actions within school that demonstrate our commitment and our passion to live up to our Mission Statement and the Gospel values. The peaceful Black Lives Matter protests taking place in our towns and cities recently reflect the understandable anger that so many people feel about this. We recognise that ongoing work is needed not only to protect our BAME community but to support us as we stand for racial justice. We have established a working party to coordinate our actions on this important issue and we look forward to hearing the voice and ideas of students in September. We will also be working together with the Catholic Association for Racial Justice. The following statement was made by two UK bishops recently:

*“As Catholics we recognise that racism is an evil which must be opposed; we all have a responsibility for actively promoting racial justice. We pray for God’s help to overcome racism in all its forms and that we might protect everyone who suffers its consequences. We are all made in God’s image.”* (Bishop Declan Lang, Lead Bishop for International Affairs and Bishop Paul McAleenan, Lead Bishop for Racial Justice).

Thank you for your continued support. Please contact us if we can support you in any way.

Yours faithfully,

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Ms A. Waugh-Lucas,

Headteacher