



**BISHOP VAUGHAN**  
CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Friday, 17 July 2020

Dear Pupils, Parents and Carers

As we draw to the end of what has undoubtedly been the strangest school term in our memory, I want to begin by thanking you.

**To our parents and carers:**

Sincere thanks for your unfailing support of the school as we were faced with adapting everything about the way in which we worked. Your positive feedback has meant more than you can know when, at times, the changes to the emerging situation and to the guidance for keeping our pupils safe seemed constant and extremely challenging to manage. The sense of community surrounding our school has never felt stronger.

With thanks too for the ways in which you have worked to support your children in learning at home. With many of our staff being parents themselves, and with so many stories in the media about the challenges of managing home education alongside working from home yourselves in many cases, we do understand that this would have been difficult at times. We do not underestimate for a moment all that you have done! We know that it has not been easy, but every bit of support that you were able to give your children with their learning and with keeping up-to-date with all of the work provided has helped us to minimise the impact of the school closure period on them. We will do absolutely everything within our power to address the impact of this fully in the new academic year.

Finally, thank you for entrusting us with the care of your children for the 'check in, catch up and prepare' days this term. We know that for many of you, the decision on whether your child should attend was a difficult one with the pandemic still being ongoing. We hope that you have been reassured by the rigorous safety measures in place and that your children have enjoyed this opportunity to re-connect with their teachers and friends before the summer break.

**To our pupils:**

Your teachers and I are simply in awe of the way in which you have responded to this uniquely challenging situation with such maturity, resilience and good grace. You have not been able to see one another or to enjoy the freedoms of 'life and learning' as normal, but we have been so impressed to see the ways in which you have responded to this. Many of you have been able to keep focused on your learning and busy developing your creative skills. Some of the work that you have completed as part of your online learning has been of an exceptionally high standard. We understand that for some of you it will have been difficult to keep motivation levels high with your routines disrupted and daily life being far from normal. We remain proud of you, however, as you have shown in abundance some of the characteristics that we try hardest to nurture in our school.

In our assemblies together and in lessons, we speak of the character virtues that we endeavour to help you develop, these embodying all that is most important in a young person in a Catholic school, for example being compassionate and loving, generous and grateful, learned and wise, faith-filled

and hopeful. You have demonstrated these in so very many ways throughout this time that we know that you are growing and flourishing in the most important ways of all! Your lovely feedback to your teachers has demonstrated your gratitude, your innovative work in this time has shown us just how learned and wise you are. Your wisdom has also been evident in your understanding of the situation: we know that many of you were disappointed to lose the opportunity to sit the exams for which you had been preparing for so long, but you have shown such mature perspectives on this. The love and compassion which you have demonstrated to your peers, some of whom have experienced family losses in this time, has been humbling to witness. Your teachers and I consider ourselves privileged to work with such exceptional young people.

With these character traits being so very strong, we know that you will be able to make rapid academic progress again when full-time schooling resumes. You *already* have the most important ingredients for success and fulfilment.

We need to let you know of some important information with regard to the return to school in September. The Director of Education has also referenced some of these in his letters to you, which are linked [here](#) for parents and carers and [here](#) for pupils. The key points are provided below:

- The Welsh Government has stated that pupils are to return to school in a **phased way for the first two weeks**, with all pupils being **full time by Monday 14<sup>th</sup> September**.
- Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> and Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> September will be staff preparation days.
- We look forward to welcoming our pupils back as shown here in the period from 3<sup>rd</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> September:

Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> September: Year 7 and Year 12

Friday 4<sup>th</sup> September: Year 7, Year 11 and Year 13

Monday 7<sup>th</sup> September: Year 7, Year 10 and Year 12

Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> September: Year 10, Year 11, Year 12 and Year 13

Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> September: Year 8, Year 9, Year 10, Year 11 and Year 12

Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> September: Year 7, Year 8, Year 9, Year 11 and Year 13

Friday 11<sup>th</sup> September: All Year groups

- All pupils will be in school each day from Monday 14<sup>th</sup> September onwards.
- The times of the school day remain unchanged. The day begins at 8.50am and ends at 3pm.
- The times within the day will be different in order to implement the staggered breaks, lunches, movements around the building, etc., that schools are expected to put in place wherever possible.
- For the first two weeks of term, **all pupils will be required to bring packed lunches to school**. This is the case for all Swansea schools. There will be no catering provision at the school in this time. Further information will be sent out about arrangements from 14<sup>th</sup> September onwards.
- The letter from the Director of Education suggests that it is highly likely that pupils using school transport will be required to wear face masks. As soon as further information is available about this, we will update you.

While we hope that there will be no further significant changes, we may be obliged to make some amendments if the guidance to schools is altered during the holiday. We will continue to publish all updates on the website.

In our planning for the new academic year, the routines established this term to keep our pupils safe will be continued, with additional measures in place also to take account of the increased number of pupils from those attending currently: In September, then, we will be:

- Maintaining hand sanitisation and using cleaning equipment throughout the day in every classroom
- Further increasing the frequency of cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces in high traffic areas
- Reducing daily contacts for children achieved by establishing 'Covid Secure year groups'
- Reducing movement around the school for staff and students
- Engaging staff and learners in understanding the importance of measures that are in place in school
- Reducing the risk of adult-to-adult transmission by restricting parental and visitor access to the site – please contact school via the contact numbers provided or via email
- Contingency planning by continuing our endeavours with blended learning

The experiences we have shared this year have certainly strengthened our community in the ways that matter most. They have, however, been very challenging at times, and we know that 2020 has thus far been a year of uncertainty and anxiety for the vast majority of people. We are, and will continue to be, working hard to ensure that the school environment is one which provides reassurance because of the strength of its safety measures and the foregrounding of wellbeing. We look forward to welcoming our pupils in September and in the meantime, we offer our prayers for your good health and our best wishes to all of our pupils and their families for a thoroughly restful and enjoyable summer break.

Yours faithfully,



Mrs E Pole  
Headteacher