



In all things faithful

St Damian's RC Science College

Lees Road
Ashton-under-Lyne
OL6 8BH

Tel: 0161 330 5974

Fax: 0161 331 4744

Email: admin@stdamians.co.uk

Web: <http://www.stdamians.co.uk/>

Follow us on Twitter: @StDamiansRCSC

Find us on Facebook

Headteacher

Mr S Logue BA (Hons), M.Ed., NPQH

15th January 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

General Update

Welcome to my weekly update on all things related to the St Damian's community. Like last week, this has been another eventful week for both pupils and staff.

Remote Learning

The attendance of pupils on remote learning has been fantastic and the teachers have been impressed with the attitude to learning from the vast majority of pupils. However, a small number of pupils are hindering the learning of other pupils, for example, by trying to remove pupils from the lesson or muting microphones. This has now been addressed but it is disappointing to report. I ask that you ensure your children are not only engaging with remote learning but also focused on their learning.

Can I thank the parents who email the school with such lovely comments. I share all these with my staff and they are appreciated. I will give a few examples of some of these below.

"To all the team of St Damian's, just a small note of thanks to you all for the well organised and superb online lessons given to my son, a year 9 student". [Parent of a boy in Year 9]

"We would like to pass our thanks and gratitude to Mr Logue and every staff member at St Damian's. We are extremely grateful for all the hard work that you are doing to support the home learning whilst still teaching pupils that are in school...The quality of the provision and live lessons that school is offering is outstanding..." [Parents of pupils in Year 7 & 11]

"I just wanted to send a quick email on behalf of our household to thank you and all the staff at St. Damian's for everything you have done for the pupils since the start of this crisis...We feel extremely fortunate that our daughter got a place at your school and that she has had the chance to learn under your leadership. Thank you". [Parent of a girl in Year 9]

"We would just like to say thank you, to you and all the teachers we think you are all doing an absolutely fantastic job with all the new challenges that have arisen in the last few weeks and the past year. The communication has been excellent, and the organisation of the school is impressive". [Parent of a boy in Year 10]

"We just wanted to say a big thank you to the staff for making the online learning so accessible and easy to follow. It is not an ideal situation at all, but we feel extremely fortunate that she attends St Damian's and has the support of all the fantastic staff". [Parent of a girl in Year 11]

"I just wanted to take the opportunity to thank you and your staff for the exceptional remote learning provided this week... Thank you again to you and your staff for your hard work and dedication it is very much appreciated. You're all doing an amazing job". [Parent of pupils in Year 7 and 11]

I have said before, but for the avoidance of doubt, one of the reasons why St Damian's is an outstanding school is because of the overwhelming support of parents who work closely with the school. I don't take this support for granted. Again, thanks!

Testing

Testing has started in earnest this week. The work behind the scenes to get this up and running so efficiently has been simply phenomenal. Another reason why St Damian's is outstanding is because of

St. Damian's RC Science College

the staff we have in school. They have volunteered to help with the testing, set up the testing site and have been through a rigorous training process to ensure everything is safe. This was all achieved in a few days and at short notice.

The plan in the next few weeks is simply this: staff will be tested weekly and the pupils in school will be tested every 3-5 days. There are 2 reasons for the testing. The first, and arguably the most important, is to identify asymptomatic pupils/staff so that they can self-isolate and protect others. The second reason is to minimise disruption in the school by not having to unnecessarily self-isolate if a close contact tests positive. I ask that all parents complete the consent forms for your children. It's important that we frequently test everybody to ensure we minimise transmission. NB. This is not a medical procedure and is a self-swabbing process

For further information about our rapid lateral testing programme see <https://www.stdamians.co.uk/covid-19-rapid-testing> where you will find access to the **Online Consent Form**.

This week the testing has been both effective and efficient. I see no reason why anyone would be against regular testing. This is not a medical procedure like receiving the vaccination would be.

Finally, we had planned to do 'mass' testing but due to pupil attendance we have delayed this until pupils return to school.

Year 11 Updates

- Mock exams. These will be posted shortly. Remember that these will form part of the grading for your qualifications, but it is fundamental that you remember to keep working/learning at home
- Exams/ Qualifications. I await the formal announcements for these and as soon as I find out, I will share with parents and our great Year 11 pupils
- February Exams. I can confirm that these will now not take place

Just to re-iterate, I am truly sorry that exams are not taking place this summer in the usual format. I know that many pupils in Year 11 were working so hard towards these exams. However, it is crucial that they continue to work hard under the direction of their teachers over the next few months. The next few months will be crucial in determining their grades in August.

As I write I will be looking into some kind of celebration for Year 11. I can't promise anything, but I can promise you that St Damian's will look to celebrate in way. Watch this space!

Supporting Pupil Well Being

I am delighted to report that pupils are engaging really well with their assemblies. Heads of Year will continue to deliver *key messages* with regards to remote learning each week. The expectation is that all pupils attend these. Likewise, Form Tutors are really pleased with pupil feedback following on from their form time activities. Another key aspect of our outstanding school is the genuine relationships between Form Tutors and your children. It is important pupils engage with their Form Tutors to help support their well-being and remain positive.

The expectation is that all pupils attend the following;

Year group	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
7	Form time		Form time		Assembly
8	Form time			Assembly	Form time
9	Form time		Assembly		Form time
10	Form time	Assembly		PSHE time	
11	Assembly		Form time		PSHE time

Attendance at these scheduled events is crucial for the well-being of your child and will help to structure their days over the next few weeks.

Safeguarding

The DfE has recently released new guidance around the sending and sharing of 'nude' and 'semi-nude' pictures, images, videos and live streams. As Headteacher, it is important that I raise this as your children are working continuously on devices whilst taking part in remote learning.

It is important that children make the school's student support officers aware if they have been exposed to receiving any of these images via the dedicated SSO email address, sso@stdamians.co.uk so that we can take action. I ask that you support us in keeping your children safe by being vigilant and having conversations with your children about staying safe online. The reality is that this has occurred to pupils currently attending school, it is **not** something that happens to someone else's child or somewhere else.

Safeguarding and Live Lessons

As we continue to adjust to remote learning we are aware parents are able to listen in and watch their children whilst they engage in live lessons. I ask that parents do not participate or join in with any aspect of lessons. If this happens, I will not hesitate to ban the child from participating in live lessons.

As always, if you wish to discuss any aspects of your child's lessons please use the normal channels of communication.

Careers

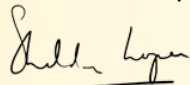
- Congratulations to the many Y11 pupils who have recently taken part in online interviews and been offered places at a range of colleges. Good luck to those who have interviews in the pipeline!
- Positive Steps, our provider of independent careers education and guidance have passed us an information leaflet about their services during the lockdown. This is on the school website in the Careers Updates tab. The leaflet also gives the contact details of our Careers Adviser, Ms K. Patel
- Please look at this week's Careers Update on the website, there are exciting opportunities for Y8 pupils to sign up for a free online cyber security course during February half-term and details of career opportunities with Barclays & Astra Zeneca as well as a UK University & Apprenticeship Fair & details on T Level courses

Quick Updates

- *Buses.* The school buses are running a normal school service apart from the afternoon 771 Stotts service to Clayton, that has been cancelled for the time being. When school returns to normal the service will be reinstated.
- *Y9 Formal Assessments.* Good luck to Y9 pupils who are completing their assessments this week. Good preparation will allow pupils to achieve well. Please follow the guidance carefully that will be published on Teams during the next few days.

As ever, take care and God bless!

Yours sincerely



Mr Logue
Headteacher