

Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> February 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope you are all keeping safe and well in these difficult times.

I would like to thank you all for the patience and understanding you have shown during this period of school closure. As a school we recognise the demands on your time and the difficulty in juggling being a parent and now supporting home learning. We encourage every family to complete as much home learning as is appropriate for your family and circumstances. You are all doing a fantastic job supporting your children with remote education.

At St Margaret's, we have allocated nearly 200 places in school for the children of critical workers and vulnerable pupils. I would like to acknowledge the work of the staff team in managing the challenge of supporting pupils in school as well as providing remote education for those at home. In addition to this, teachers and teaching assistants have been checking in with you and to see if we can support you in any other way. These calls have been vital in collating information for senior leaders to act on. We will continue to make calls throughout the period of school closure and they will often come up on your phone as a private number. The reception desk is manned throughout the day and encourage you to call school if we can help. We are also providing a weekly zoom meeting for each class so pupils can see their teacher and teaching assistant as well as the other children in their class. If you have any questions relating to remote education please contact Mrs Fazal – [s.fazal@st-margarets.manchester.sch.uk](mailto:s.fazal@st-margarets.manchester.sch.uk)

During this period of school closure, we have endeavoured to support families as much as possible. We have through the government voucher scheme provided vouchers for pupils eligible for FSM. As a school, we have allocated nearly 100 electronic devices to support home learning and a number of dongles and broadband data to support remote education. We have also provided a stationary pack for all pupils, if you have not already collected them for your children they remain available at the school office.

We are aware that for many families, the challenge of sharing devices and limited data impacts the ability to complete remote learning. We have allocated all the devices allocated to us by the Department for Education and have supplemented this with laptops from within school. To further support families we have received 60 wifi vouchers to support broadband access. If you are struggling with a lack of devices or broadband please contact Mrs Fazal and we will do our best to help you.

For many families the current period may be causing financial hardship. As a school we have joined a pilot project with the local authority to support families in need of financial support. We would urge any families who are struggling to contact us as you may qualify to request a one of payment of £65 to support you. This package is aimed primarily at those families who are not in receipt of government benefits. If you think this may be of benefit to your family please contact Miss Shaw – [H.shaw@st-margarets.manchester.sch.uk](mailto:H.shaw@st-margarets.manchester.sch.uk)

I know for many parents and carers you will be wondering when school will reopen for all pupils. The government have stated that schools will not reopen for all pupils before Monday 8th March. We will provide more information regarding school reopening when it is available.

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I would like to take the opportunity to remind parents and carers that next Friday (12th February) is a staff INSET day. School will be closed for all pupils on Friday 12th February. School will remain closed for all pupils during the half-term from 15th February to 19th February. There will be no remote education during half-term and encourage all families to try and enjoy it the best way you can taking a break from school work. School will re-open for the children of critical workers and vulnerable pupils on Monday 22nd February. For all other pupils, remote education will continue until further notice.

Finally, it is with deep sadness that I need to inform parents and carers that Mrs Brew-Butler has passed away after a long illness. Mrs Brew-Butler was a very special member of our school community. Mrs Brew-Butler had worked at St Margaret's for 13 years touching many families and pupils with her dedication to pupils and positive upbeat approach to life. She will be missed greatly.

I think I can speak for many of us when I say that this lockdown has been a challenge, but with the roll out of the vaccine programme and the steady fall in the number of cases brighter days lie ahead. I look forward to the day, hopefully soon, when we can welcome all pupils back into school and get back to some form of normality.

Best wishes,

David Hunter  
Headteacher