

Monday 1<sup>st</sup> November

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope you are all well and enjoyed the half-term break.

I am pleased to be able to report that the number of positive cases of COVID-19 in school remained relatively low throughout the first half-term. Overall, there have been 15 cases so far this academic year and it appears based on the evidence that there has not been a spread of the virus within school. Virtually all the positive cases so far have been individual cases and linked to wider community transmission of the virus. I believe our slow and cautious lifting of COVID-19 preventative measures has played a role in this and as we enter the winter months we will remain cautious.

As school returns to a sense of normality following the challenges of the last 18 months, we are able to focus more on school improvement and our core function of teaching and learning. The lost learning of the COVID-19 school closures has impacted pupils differently. In school, we are targeting support to help pupils catch up in a variety of ways, focusing on the areas of the curriculum we feel additional support is required.

Regular attendance is vital to help support pupils with their learning in normal times and is now more important than ever. I fully understand parents and carers feel cautious around sending your child into school if they have coughs and colds given the circumstances of the last 18 months, however I would encourage all parents and carers to send your child into school if they are well enough to attend unless they have symptoms of COVID-19. Pupil attendance this academic year is in-line with the national figures but below pre-pandemic levels of attendance thus contributing to further lost learning time.

I am sure parents and carers will be keen to find out how their child is progressing and what support is in place to address the gaps in learning and how you can support your child. We will be holding a parents evening later this month on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> and Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> November. We will be offering two versions of parents' evening depending on the preference of parents and carers. One evening will be a remote parents' evening with the second evening being a traditional face-to-face parents evening. Face-to-face meetings will be socially distanced with other preventative measures in place to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19. Parents and carers will be able to choose the type of parents' evening they prefer.

In a further step towards returning to normality on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> November we will be launching drop in coffee mornings where parents and carers will have an opportunity to meet with senior leaders to discuss any aspect of school life. These will be informal gatherings where a member of the senior leadership team will be present.

Later this month, 'school photographs' will be taking place on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> November. The photographs will be individual photographs for each pupil and there will also be the opportunity for siblings to have a photograph together.

I am pleased to be able to share with parents and carers that we will be providing a winter holiday activities and food club (HAF) from Monday 20<sup>th</sup> to Friday 24<sup>th</sup> December. The winter HAF will have a capacity of 72 places. The format will be similar to the summer with a range of different activities on offer and all pupils attending will receive a hot meal. If you would like to book a place for your child please contact [h.shaw@st-margarets.manchester.sch.uk](mailto:h.shaw@st-margarets.manchester.sch.uk) by Friday 12<sup>th</sup> November. We will assess the level of demand for places and inform parents and carers of whether they have secured a place to attend by Friday 19<sup>th</sup> November.

Finally, I would like to finish by making reference to the major event of the moment COP26. In school there have been different events linked to COP26. The Green Team have been working with Whalley Range Climate Action group looking at what governments can do to help ordinary people. The Green Team have also led an assembly to explain COP26 to pupils. In addition, Reverend Grace Thomas has visited school to hold an assembly on how to look after the environment. The school's artist in residence has worked with pupils to create a piece of art around COP26 that can be seen as you pass school or enter the car park. This Friday, local MP Afzal Khan will be visiting school and holding a question and answer session with pupils.

To help support your children understand the impact of global warming on the environment I would encourage all parents and carers to make a small change that will benefit the environment whether that be recycling more, using less plastic or walking to school one day a week instead of driving - these small changes will help your child understand the concept of climate change and recognise that as individuals we can all make a difference.

If you have any questions or queries around any aspect of school life, please do not hesitate to contact me – [d.hunter@st-margarets.manchester.sch.uk](mailto:d.hunter@st-margarets.manchester.sch.uk)

Best wishes,

David Hunter  
Headteacher