



St Francis of Assisi Catholic College

Friday 8th January 2021

Dear Parent/ Carer

I apologise in advance that this is quite a lengthy correspondence but under the circumstances it is important to have as much information in one place, and to help it is in subsections.

Let me firstly say that I hope you are all well and healthy and then assure you that we all desperately wish that school was open to all students, but understand why the decision had to be taken for health and safety. We had the same notice as all sectors to convert our way of working for Tuesday morning and I want to thank you all for your support in delivering these changes.

It remains a difficult time for everyone and as I so often say, we have to trust in the Lord that he will guide and sustain us.

Remote learning

We moved to remote learning for all on Tuesday morning. There is absolutely no substitute to students being in school and my staff would much rather teach in school then remotely but we have a very purposeful approach. We always anticipated that there might be another lockdown and our INSET training has focussed on how we would be delivering if another lockdown occurred.

It is a decision to deliver pre-recorded lessons rather than live lessons and this decision is based on many factors including the trials that we ran, access, quality assurance and screen time. The link [here](#) shares the full rationale as to why at SFA has chosen pre-recorded lessons rather than live ones.

To ensure students have a full diet though we are doing daily worship activities, daily well-being activities, assemblies, extra-curricular challenges and are making pastoral calls to every household each week.

Where students are not engaging we are tracking this daily and making follow up phone calls, so whilst we do not register students, we do track for daily logging on to Firefly and students do have to submit work. We already know exactly how many students are working and are following up where some are not.

Positively, we will continue to reward students regularly for their amazing level of engagement and quality of work produced. Staff will continue to issue Golden Tickets via firefly and the recipients names will enter a weekly draw. The winners will be informed via firefly and amazon vouchers will be posted home.

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Examinations

The Education Secretary announced on Tuesday that it was at the discretion of individual schools as to whether BTEC examinations ran in January and February. We are not continuing with these exams and those impacted have been written too.

On Wednesday it was announced that there would be no GCSE and A-level examinations this Summer and that there would now be a period of consultation about how teacher assessed grades could be delivered consistently and fairly.

Beyond this statement we have no further information but I appreciate that there will be many questions and considerations from parents and students. All I can say is that when we know what the assessment criteria looks like we will adapt so that students are in the best place to meet it. If that means reorganising mocks examinations then we will, if it means in-class assessments then we will put these in place and I will communicate as soon as possible. This will be an anxious time but there will be opportunities when we return to strive for the best grades and we will put everything in place to facilitate this.

In the meantime, the one thing that is clear is that there will be some form of assessments on the horizon which will be used to form outcomes and grades. It is therefore imperative that continues to students to continue to work hard at home.

Curriculum

Considering the unknowns regarding examinations we are still working to deliver all curriculums to their end point so that all students, in whatever year group are ready for their next stages.

Free School Meals

All students who are entitled to Free School Meals will be contacted regards the provision for ensuring all are fed whilst out of school. The Government have said that this will be through the voucher system that was in place in April 2020 and as soon as they open it up we will immediately enrol all that have free school meals.

Parents evenings

As per the whole school calendar Parents Evenings will be taking place but they will be done remotely, starting with Year 10 on Tuesday 26th January. Parents of Year 10 will receive a letter on Monday which explains everything they need to know and do.

Communications

I will aim to only communicate at the end of each week in the interest of giving the most up to date information.

If you require workbooks physically sending home please email csherrington@stfrancis.cc

For covid related queries please email covid@stfrancis.cc

For safeguarding or welfare please email cp@stfrancis.cc

And for any Firefly issues please email helpdesk@stfrancis.cc

Finally, education remains hugely important. Education is a key to unlocking an individual future and it is best served when in the right state of mind so we do not encourage that students sit in front of the screen all day. With our approach students can go back to their learning after doing some physical exercise or breaking for lunch and we strongly encourage this.

I know I can rely on your support with all that we try to achieve together for the betterment of all students.

God Bless

Luke Salkeld