



ST JOHN PAYNE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

21st January 2021

Dear Parents & Carers

With some students able to attend during partial closure, I write to provide information clarifying eligibility <https://bit.ly/3c0aKeg>, and to detail comments this morning from the Secretary of State for Education.

In addition to the extensive list of critical worker roles, the definition of vulnerable children includes those who may have difficulty engaging with remote education due to a lack of devices or a quiet space to study. There is therefore potential for requests to accommodate growing numbers as the difficulties of home learning over an extended period increase. These may be exacerbated by other family members also working from home, and by the potentially adverse effect on students' mental health & wellbeing.

We are glad to have a small number of students attending each day, and will always attempt to accommodate those for whom the circumstances apply. They are supervised in Year group bubbles in computer rooms, and engage with the same live lessons as their peers learning from home. Students within each bubble will have a range of different teachers throughout any day, and it is therefore helpful if they are able to bring their own headphones.

Whilst we remain confident in our ability to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our whole community, and are sympathetic to requests, I ask that you consider the need and whether it might be possible for your child to continue learning from home. This will aid our efforts to manage supervision and minimise risk.

If you require your child to attend and have not yet confirmed your consent that they be supervised in self-administering a Covid 19 lateral flow test, I ask that you do so in order that we are able to provide supervising staff with additional reassurance. All supervising staff have been tested.

I in no way wish to deter you from requesting that your child attend, and I assure you we will be very happy to accommodate them if learning from home presents any barrier to their progress or in any way compromises their mental health & wellbeing.

The Secretary of State for Education this morning clarified that students would be able to return to school as soon as scientific and health advice allows. Mr Williamson confirmed that he is hopeful students will return before Easter, and that schools and families would receive two weeks' notice. It remains to be confirmed whether students who were due to sit public examinations will be permitted to return sooner.

Thank you for your ongoing understanding and support. We remain hugely proud of how well the students are responding, and of the spirit that continues to unite all quarters of our community.

Yours sincerely

Mr T. Coen

Headteacher

