



# ST JOHN PAYNE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

11<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear Parents & Carers

Thank you for the feedback we have received on last week's online learning. Disappointment and uncertainty aside, the term has started really well and we are pleased with the high levels of engagement. Always eager to improve our practice, we are pleased that along with the overwhelmingly positive feedback, we have received observations that will further aid engagement and progress whilst also supporting student and staff wellbeing.

We are mindful that students are facing whole days at a screen, potentially with little fresh air, and that maintaining focus presents additional demands with regards to managing time, organising resources, operating technology, asking questions, following instructions and completing tasks, all without the same immediacy of teacher support that is available in class. With families reporting that this exacts additional strain, teachers will therefore include activities that allow time away from screens. Students may on occasion be set an independent task.

It was with this in mind that I noted in last Sunday's letter that lessons may be curtailed to 40 minutes. This will support students in managing their time when they may need to save work and ensure they have the required materials for the following lesson. Dependent on how teachers apply the additional time between lessons it may on occasion result in an extension to break & lunch.

It has also been noted that homework places an additional strain on students following long periods at a screen without opportunity to stretch their legs or benefit from fresh air. Whilst it is important for Key Stage 4 & 5 students to continue coursework or assessment, teachers will attempt to set tasks that do not subject students to undue expectation, and for KS3 students will ensure tasks are as simple and minimal as possible. In all cases we will attempt to set tasks that do not require a computer.

We are equally conscious of the implications for teachers, who are likewise spending extended periods at a screen. This is a particular consideration for our Year 11 & Year 9 parents' evenings on 21<sup>st</sup> January and 11<sup>th</sup> February, when appointments following a day's lessons present potential for teachers to spend up to eight hours at a screen. In support of staff wellbeing, teachers of Years 11 & 9 will set their Period 5 & 6 classes independent work on these days.

Please continue to contact us if we can be of any help. We will continue to review our provision, and will send surveys later this week to aid our evaluation and inform how we might further improve. We are proud of how well the students continue to respond, and grateful for your ongoing support.

Yours sincerely

Mr T. Coen

Headteacher

