

# St Wilfrid's Catholic School

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Headteacher: Michael Ferry BEd (Hons) MA NPQH

Diocese of Arundel & Brighton and West Sussex County Council

22 October 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope you are all keeping safe and well.

## **Confirmation of a positive test result for Covid-19:**

I wrote to you earlier this week to inform you that I had received confirmation of a positive Covid-19 test regarding a member of staff. There was no impact on students as none were identified as having been in "close contact". Subsequently, I have received confirmation of a further two positive test results for staff with one having the same impact upon students as I have described above and one leading to two students being identified and subsequently requiring to remain at home for a specific period of time.

Earlier today I received confirmation of two positive test results regarding two students, one in Yr 8 and one in Yr 11. The close contacts for both have been identified and have returned home for a period of isolation before being able to return after the half term break. All of their parents/carers have been informed of the requirements following anyone who is identified as a "close contact" ie that the student should self-isolate for a period of 14 days from the last contact and that this does not affect any other household member. I can assure you that I continuously refer to the national guidance for schools when making any decisions following the confirmation of a positive test result and act accordingly with the health and safety of all members of our school community remaining paramount.

None of the instances I have described are connected in any way and as such they are classed as isolated cases. Due the way we have organised our curriculum, and in the way that students are managed around the school during the course of each day, we are able to maintain a very high standard of "bubble integrity" whilst maintaining a broad and balanced curriculum and keeping the risk of any virus transmission as low as possible. As such, the impact on students is proving to be minimal and as an example, only a relatively small number of students were sent home today in connection with the test results as I have described.

The school remains open and your child should continue to attend as normal if they remain well. There are further details in a separate document accompanying this letter regarding "what to do" if your child develops any symptoms of Covid-19.

## **Free School Meals (FSM):**

I fully recognise the impact of the closure of Gatwick and other areas of employment in and around Crawley over the last few months, and the difficulties that many families are facing regarding household finances.

If this applies to you and you are currently out of work/not receiving an income, or if your income has been significantly reduced, you may be entitled to benefits through the universal credit system. If you are unsure/have not yet applied, you can access more information and begin the application process using this link <https://www.gov.uk/apply-universal-credit>.

As well as this, you may wish to apply for your son/daughter to receive a Free School Meal. The following link below gives you information regarding eligibility and how to apply <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/education-children-and-families/schools-and-colleges/free-school-meals/#is-my-child-eligible>. If you are at all unsure about this or need to speak to someone at school regarding this, please feel free to email Miss Kennedy [m.kennedy@stwilfrids.com](mailto:m.kennedy@stwilfrids.com) who may be able to guide you in the process.

You may be aware that there continues to be a national campaign to ask the government to provide those families who are entitled to FSMs with vouchers over the school holidays. There was a vote in parliament yesterday on this issue and unfortunately the motion to provide FSM vouchers was defeated. I would like to bring your attention to the fact that the local MPs for Crawley, Horsham and Horley all voted to defeat this. If you would like to contact them to express your own opinion then please do so.

MP for Crawley: Henry Smith [henry.smith.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:henry.smith.mp@parliament.uk)  
MP for Horley: Clair Coutinho [claire.coutinho.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:claire.coutinho.mp@parliament.uk)  
MP for Horsham: Jeremy Quin [jeremy.quin.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:jeremy.quin.mp@parliament.uk)  
MP for East Grinstead: Mims Davies [mims.davies.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:mims.davies.mp@parliament.uk)

### **Examinations Summer 2021:**

You will be aware that the government have announced that exams will go ahead next summer but with a delay of approximately 3 weeks for some of them. Unfortunately, some exams, including a Maths and English GCSE exam will still take place before May half term as will some others. This is seen by the Secretary of State for Education (Gavin Williamson) as the fairest way to award grades next year.

The “three week” delay does not make up for over 12 weeks of lost time in school which students experienced from March to June last academic year, nor does it make any allowance for any time lost in the coming months should any student not be able to attend school or should their teachers be absent. There has been a national call from Headteachers and professional associations who are calling for urgent reform and I will continue to work hard in this area to call for a fair system of awarding grades next year as I firmly believe that no student should be disadvantaged as a result of the pandemic when it comes to them achieving GCSE and A level grades next year. Should you wish to contact your local MP to raise any concerns you may have, please do using the email address above.

Please be assured that we are making every effort to support your son/daughter, whatever year group they are in, but especially those in exam classes to ensure that we give them every chance of success.

I sincerely hope that you and your families have a good half term, staying safe and well, and I look forward to re-opening on Monday November 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Yours sincerely



Michael Ferry  
Headteacher