

# 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

8<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

I hope you are all managing to keep safe and well and are coping with the restrictions which are now in place during this lockdown period.

On Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> January, the Prime Minister stated that schools “were safe” but by Monday 4<sup>th</sup>, we were “vectors of transmission”. Since his statement Monday evening we have had further statements from the Secretary of State and others, which have led to contradiction, confusion and heightened anxiety by all members of the school community; students, parents, carers and staff alike. Much of the detailed guidance, especially regarding examinations, is still awaited and even some of the guidance which was published earlier this week has either changed or has been withdrawn.

Therefore, I am writing to you now to offer reassurance. Amidst the “shifting sands” of announcements and ever changing guidance, one thing which I can guarantee is that every member of staff is doing their utmost to ensure that we provide as high a level of support and online learning as we possibly can. I assure you that I will keep you as up to date as is possible as things develop but would ask you to bear in mind that when you hear an announcement being made, I and my colleagues are hearing it for the first time as well so I would ask for your patience in that regard.

As far as I can at present, I can give you some information/updates on the following:

## **Testing for Covid-19:**

At present, and as per a previous letter, we will not be embarking on a testing programme in school. A significant number of questions/concerns have been raised on this issue both locally and nationally and indeed at least one local Director of Public Health (not in West Sussex) has advised schools in that area not to proceed with certain elements of the testing programme as outlined in the government guidance due to a “lack of supporting evidence”. Only yesterday, the government removed its guidance from its website. That being the case, I have to assume that the guidance is changing and will be re-published at a later date.

## **Online learning:**

Mrs Denyer has previously sent out a number of “how to” guides regarding how to access work, etc. If any student, parent or carer has any questions regarding any aspect of the work set, please could you make contact with the relevant person as identified below (all specific email addresses are available on the school website):

- Subject specific questions to the Class Teacher
- General questions to the Form Tutor
- Technical questions to Mrs Denyer

To reinforce some of the aspects of Mrs Denyer's previous communications; the work provided for students will include frequent, clear explanations of new content which is either delivered by the teacher or through high quality curriculum resources or videos. Students should be checking their school email alongside the work set via Teams and should be using their school emails to communicate with staff as necessary. Additional support for using TEAMS has been shared via ShowMyHomework, including guidance on how to submit and upload work. We continue to review our online provision and will seek to improve it as far as is possible with the resources we have available and under the restrictions we are working in.

**Provision of Laptops/internet access:**

Miss Kennedy is the point of contact for anyone with queries regarding provision of hardware and potential support for internet access. What we are able to provide is extremely limited but if you are having significant problems in this area, please do contact her via email [m.kennedy@stwilfrids.com](mailto:m.kennedy@stwilfrids.com) for advice and any support which is available.

As we continue to work through the next few weeks, it remains as yet unclear as to when the school will be able to re-open for all students. Information relevant to specific year groups will continue to be sent as and when we are able to update you.

I realise that this is a difficult and uncertain time for everyone. Please be assured that as and when I or my colleagues are able to update you, we will do so at the earliest opportunity.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Ferry', with a stylized flourish underneath.

Michael Ferry  
Headteacher