

Thursday 22nd July 2021

Dear Parents / Carers,

What a year it has been!

There have been challenges and successes, but together we have navigated the twists and turns of 2020/2021 and arrived at a much-needed holiday for both pupils and staff.

Our entire school community has played a role in keeping people safe and I would like to thank each one of you for your contribution in this endeavour. We are hoping to open our doors again and welcome back parents and carers into the school and look forward to finally meeting many of you from September.

I want to thank the staff of St Thomas More for going above and beyond this year, changing their work habits, learning new skills and for working so enthusiastically to keep education going in tough and challenging times.

School leavers

We will be saying a fond farewell to several members of staff this summer. Mrs Jill Duncan, Mr Ged Walsh and Mrs Jeanette Birch have decided that the time is right to retire from teaching. With more than 110 teaching years between them, they have committed their entire working life to education and I want to thank them for everything they have given in their many years of service at St Thomas More and wish them a long, happy and healthy retirement. Ms Jules Thompson will be moving to another school having secured a promotion after 15 years at STM. I want to wish her the very best of luck. Miss Amy Taylor will be leaving us as she starts her teacher training this September, I think Miss Taylor will make a fabulous teacher. Mrs Debbie Delight, a wonderful supply teacher and big supporter of STM will also be retiring. I thank her for her commitment to the school over many years.

Return in September

The Government has asked schools to stagger the return of pupils in September to conduct Covid testing at the start of the new academic year. Parent/Carer consent for Covid testing will roll over into the next academic year. The arrangements are as follows:

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|---------------------------------------|--|
| Monday 6 th September - | Year 7 will be tested and will attend school for the full day
Year 11 should arrive at school at 1:30pm for testing, before returning home |
| Tuesday 7 th September - | Year 7 and 11 will attend school for the full day
Year 8 should arrive at school at 9:00am for testing, before returning home
Year 9 should arrive at school at 11:00am for testing, before returning home
Year 10 should arrive at school at 1:30pm for testing, before returning home |
| Wednesday 8 th September - | All pupils will attend school for the full day |



Covid measures in September 2021

Bubbles are out and the school will operate as close to normal from September 2021. Whilst we do not know what the national picture will be in September, there are certain measures that will be retained. Hand washing / sanitation, cleaning down of workspaces each lesson and the one way system will continue into the new year. Face coverings at this moment in time will not be compulsory, but if there is a need for them, we will bring them back. In addition, we will continue to allow pupils to wear their PE kit on the days they have PE.

We have planned for every eventuality leading into the next academic year should there be a request from the Government to change, so please be assured that we will do everything to keep education going.

School day from September 2021

Following a review of our curriculum offer at St Thomas More, the timetable will be changing in September. To reflect the new timetable, the timings of the day will change:

Registration	8:50 - 9:10
Period 1	9:10 - 10:10
Period 2	10:10 - 11:10
Break	11:10 - 11:25
Period 3	11:25 - 12:25
Lunch	12:25 - 13:10
Period 4	13:10 - 14:10
Period 5	14:10 - 15:10

We will continue with a 2-week timetable, now consisting of 50, 1 hour lessons. Similarly to this academic year, we will have a Week 1 and Week 2 timetable.

Curriculum Offer at STM

It is important to evaluate the curriculum we offer to our pupils, ensuring it is fit for purpose and meets the needs of children for the future. It is also important to evaluate the needs of children following significant disruption to their learning over the last 18 months. Moving to a 2-week, 50 period timetable ensures that a variety of subjects can be taught, protecting subjects that are often cut by other schools such as technology and the arts.

We are changing the way that PSHE, SRE and careers will be delivered in school and creating more time for English, Maths and Science. Pupils will focus on one modern foreign language instead of two and drama has been brought back to the timetable in Year 9.

Covid-19 Testing over the summer

Regular rapid asymptomatic testing will be paused in schools over the summer. However, LFD testing is still widely available and kits can be collected either from your local pharmacy or ordered [online](#). If your child tests positive during the summer, there is no need to notify the school of the test result, instead you should follow national guidance and inform NHS Track and Trace.

Anyone who tests positive using an LFD test will be asked to take a confirmatory follow-up PCR test. It remains essential that anyone who gets a positive LFD result self-isolates immediately for 10 days, as well as the other members of their household. You must only leave home for your follow-up test. You should arrange your confirmatory PCR immediately.



For the fastest result, we suggest you [book a PCR test at a test site](#). You can also book a home test [online](#) or call 119 to book a test.

A PCR test will confirm if you have been affected by coronavirus or not, and reduce unnecessary self-isolation by you and your household. If you then receive a negative result from the PCR, and the PCR test was taken within 2 days of the LFD, then you and your contacts will be informed you can cease self-isolating. Individuals who test negative from their LFD will not need to isolate or take a confirmatory test.

Provision for FSM

Derbyshire County Council are contacting parents/carers directly about vouchers for FSM provision over the holidays. If they have not been in contact as yet, we have been assured that they will. The roll out of this provision has been staggered as they are managing the situation for all families in receipt of FSM across Derbyshire.

If you have not received communication from Derbyshire CC, please contact the council by completing the following online form: <https://apps.derbyshire.gov.uk/applications/formBuilder/food-vouchers-for-children/143ECB51-ACAD-4FAF-A11C-915258D22724>

If your circumstances have changed recently, more information about financial support and benefits can be found at www.derbyshire.gov.uk/winter

Safeguarding and Further Support

If you are concerned for the welfare of a child whilst we are closed for the Summer Holidays, further support and guidance can be found at

<https://www.st-thomasmore.derbyshire.sch.uk/page/?title=Covid%2D19&pid=164>

Alternatively, please contact Starting Point on 01629 533190 or in an emergency, the Police on 101/999.

Once again, thank you for everything you have done to support the school over the last academic year and for your kind, supportive messages to school.

Enjoy the summer, stay safe, healthy and see you in September!



Mr D Redfern
Headteacher