

NJB/SP
30 November 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

Decision to move to Remote Learning Provision on Monday 21 and Tuesday 22 December 2020

The Headteachers and Chair of Governors of the Sheffield Catholic Partnership schools have been discussing the implications for our families and staff of staying in school until the end of Tuesday 22 December, and in light of recent announcements regarding contact between households over the Christmas period, have decided to revert to a model of home learning for the last two days of term. The Diocese have been consulted on this decision and given their support as have the Local Authority and Public Health Sheffield, both of whom have stated they feel it is the most sensible option in light of complexities around contact tracing after the 18 December. Subsequently the proposal has been approved by our Full Governing Body.

As you will know All Saints Catholic High School term dates are set alongside the Sheffield Catholic Schools Partnership, and they are set in line with the Bishop's guidance. This guidance asks schools to work as close to the two Great Feasts of Christmas and Easter as possible. If we had known about the implications of COVID-19 when we set the term dates, we would have set them differently and would have been in line with other Sheffield schools and the vast majority of schools across the country whose term date ends on Friday 18 December.

I would want to emphasise that this is not early school closure and that staff will be in school on Monday 21 and Tuesday 22 December. The expectation is that all students will engage in learning throughout these two days. Therefore, we will not be altering term dates at any point in this academic year from those published.

I am conscious of the potential implications of such a decision, namely the loss of face to face provision at a time when so many students have lost time in school due to Covid-19. I have outlined our approach to home learning overleaf but will first explain the rationale behind the decision.

If we are open to pupils on 21 and 22 December, there is an increased risk, compared to the situation in other Sheffield schools, that we would have to notify parents of the requirement for pupils to self-isolate on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day given the 48 hours close contact period. Our capacity and capability to effectively track and trace and notify affected students after the 22 December would be severely compromised and one positive case, based on our experience over the past weeks, could potentially lead to negative impact for 80+ families over the Christmas period. Whilst there is no guarantee of a student not contracting the virus as late as the 18 December, thus potentially affecting numbers of students over the Christmas period, we would be in a position to track and trace and notify families. Closure on Friday 18 December gives a full week before Christmas Day, and families would know by Tuesday 22 December if there were any need to self-isolate.

There is no perfect approach to the circumstances in which we find ourselves but after detailed discussion and consultation with Head teachers, Governors and Diocesan representatives the partnership of schools feel this is the most sensible option in the interests of the health and well being of our families and staff over the Christmas break.

Remote learning Provision on Monday 21 and Tuesday 22 December

We fully appreciate the need to minimise the loss of face to face provision over these two days and we have made this decision with 3 weeks of the term remaining in order to give families sufficient prior notice and for us to prepare our remote learning provision across all subjects and year groups.

Firstly, I would ask that you support our message to all students that these two days are not the beginning of the Christmas break and we expect all students to follow the timetables that will be produced for them during these two days. The intention is that, for the most part, these timetables will replicate their usual school timetable. However, we also recognise that 5x1 hour sessions are not always feasible for all students when working at home, particularly those in Key Stage 3. We intend to incorporate our virtual Advent liturgy as well as one Physical Education activity in to student timetables over these two days.

Students in examination years can expect to follow their usual timetables with lessons streamed live by their teacher in school through Microsoft Teams. All students will have some live lessons although, in line with our remote learning policy, we do not advocate or wish students to be working at a screen for hours in a day so, in some cases, the activity and resources for a lesson will be given to students by their teacher in advance to carry out at the scheduled time.

Finalised details of student timetables and the nature of provision for each lesson will be shared with all students in the penultimate week of term.

Please do refer to our Remote Learning strategy on our website and/or via the MyEd message sent out last week.

In making this decision we are also conscious that for some families, notably those parents/carers who are key workers, these two days may cause some disruption with regards child care, particularly for students in the younger year groups. If you are in this category and have any concerns please contact our student support team through D.Stokes@allsaints.sheffield.sch.uk

I hope that you can appreciate our rationale behind this decision. Any decisions we are taking relating to the current pandemic are far from straightforward, but I assure you that they are always taken in what we believe to be the best interests of our whole school community. As always, I thank you for your continued support and understanding during these challenging times.

Yours sincerely



S P Pender
Headteacher