



In all things faithful

22nd January 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

General Update

Welcome to my weekly update on all things related to the St Damian's community. This week the school has started to 'settle down' because of the announcement that schools will not re-open again until Mid-February. This gives the school the opportunity to better plan and not respond to late announcements.

However, I do accept that this is not ideal for many/most of our pupils. Both my great staff and I want the pupils to return to school as quickly as possible, as long as it is safe to do so. In the interim, I can't stress enough the importance of remote learning on their educational development and also their engagement in form time and assemblies on their emotional well-being.

Pupil Leadership to support Remote Learning

- *'The Secret World of Creativity'*. Our first edition of the St. Damian's new pupil publication, *'The Secret World of Creativity'* will be published at the beginning of May. Pupils in years 7 & 8 will be given details of how they can submit their creative writing for publication during form time next week. Once submitted, our Year 9 publishing team will select the best pieces to appear in our first edition. Please encourage your child to unlock their imagination and spend some time over the next few weeks being creative. There has never been a better time to dream...
- *STEM leaders*. Our Year 10 STEM leaders have been busy over the last few weeks creating Science quizzes to support Year 7 & 8 remote learning. Their science teachers will explain to them how they can access and complete the quizzes on TEAMS. Uploads will start next week and as ever rewards will follow for those pupils who engage.

Update on Remote Learning

I am pleased to report that the vast majority of pupils are logging on punctually and working hard. That's great! However, teaching remotely is a skill that is still relatively new to St Damian's teachers. We are constantly looking at ways that we can improve our online lessons and one of the ways we are doing this is through collaborative teaching. Over the next couple of weeks, teachers will be team teaching/observing each other. To enable this to happen, the teacher may set work on TEAMS for the pupils to complete once the register has been taken. Please could you support us by encouraging your child to complete any work set.

NB. Although our remote learning skills and infrastructure is improving, there is always room for improvement, and behind the scenes we are learning all the time. However, despite these improvements I believe that there is no substitute for face-to-face teacher where positive relationships are developed. These relationships are the foundation of our success!

Year 11 Update

- *Contacting parents*. Next week I will personally contact parents of pupils who have massively underachieved in their Mocks and/or are not engaging with the remote learning. For the avoidance of any doubt, your child must continue to work hard at home, follow all their teachers' instructions and ensure assessment tasks are completed to a high standard. What follows in the next few

St Damian's RC Science College

Lees Road
Ashton-under-Lyne
OL6 8BH

Tel: 0161 330 5974

Fax: 0161 331 4744

Email: admin@stdamians.co.uk

Web: <http://www.stdamians.co.uk/>

Follow us on Twitter: @StDamiansRCSC

Find us on Facebook

Headteacher

Mr S Logue BA (Hons), M.Ed., NPQH

St. Damian's RC Science College

months will have a massive bearing on their results in July/August.

- *GCSEs and Consultation.* In the last letter I sent out a consultation process with regards to how GCSE/BTEC qualifications will be awarded this year. I ask that parents take time to complete this consultation and ask their children to also complete it before the deadline.
- *Pupils and their work.* It has come to my attention that some pupils are producing work that does not reflect their ability nor what they have produced previously. In fact, it looks like it may have been plagiarised from the internet. I assume this is because they are keen to produce work for their teachers so that they can achieve their best grade. It is important for teachers to accurately assess your child's work so that they can provide constructive feedback. **I ask that parents please ensure that their children ONLY complete and submit work that is their own.** Submitting 'copied' work impedes your child's progress and longer-term progression. Furthermore, it is envisaged that when pupils return to school, they will have to complete assessments under controlled conditions to ensure that their teacher judgements are robust.
- *Form Time/Assembly.* I ask that your child is logged on to Form Time and the weekly assembly promptly at 9am on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Form time and assembly forms an important part of our pastoral care and failure to attend could result in pupils missing out on key messages.

Safeguarding

Sadly, there are an increasing number of website and/or social media platforms that are encouraging children to 'log on' and be linked to a complete stranger for 'chats'. We are extremely concerned about the dangers associated with these random link ups, which are attractive to young people because they use a similar format to adult dating sites. Please make sure that you are aware of sites that your child is visiting and do not hesitate to challenge your child if you are concerned about any of their online history. Again, I refer you to <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/> for further guidance.

Year 9 Holocaust Memorial Day 2021

St Damian's will be joining together with hundreds of people over the UK via a Webcast to listen to Eve Kugler BEM, a Holocaust survivor, to mark Holocaust Memorial Day 2021.

Eve Kugler BEM was born in Halle, Germany in 1931. She witnessed the events of Kristallnacht in November 1939, after which her father was sent to Buchenwald. In June 1939, the family fled to Paris on a forged visa. After living in the occupied city, Eve and one of her sisters were able to find refuge in New York. Eve's other sister went into hiding and her parents survived the concentration camps.

The live talk will take place on Tuesday 26th January – Holocaust Memorial Day. Year 9 pupils are invited to login to the talk from 9.45am for the speaker to start at 10am. The session should last until 11am and finish with a reflection. Year 9 will have the opportunity to access the live talk via a link that will be shared via TEAMS by their RE teacher.

Calendar Updates

- *Y10 Parents' Evening.* Last week Year 10 Parents' Evening took place. This was not the traditional Parents' Evenings as we know it, but most conversations were positive and constructive. My hope is that Year 10 pupils will soon be back in school to continue with face-to face learning but in the meantime, it is crucial that they actively participate in the remote learning.

- *Yr9 Formal Assessments.* A big well done to Year 9 who have just completed their Formal Assessments. It was great to see most pupils embracing the online tasks and submitting their work promptly. Catch up sessions will be run for pupils who were absent from an assessment session. Watch this space for information about Year 9 options.
- *Year 8 Parents Evening.* This will take place week commencing 8th February. During this week you will get a phone call from a member of staff with regards to your child's progress and attitude to learning. This will also be an opportunity to raise any issues you may have so that we can address them.

Buses

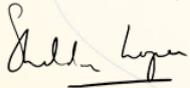
We have been informed that both the morning and afternoon 771 school bus service will stop running from Monday 25th January during lockdown due to lack of use. The service will resume when the pupils return to school.

Finally,

Over the past few weeks there has been a considerable number of people dying from Covid. I ask that you remember them all in your prayers. Hopefully, the vaccination will bring some respite from the situation we are currently facing. As I repeatedly say, we must remain positive and optimistic about the future. In the meantime, it is important that we all follow the National guidelines.

Take care and God bless!

Yours sincerely



Mr Logue
Headteacher