

# St Augustine's RC High School

Newsletter  
29th January 2021

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Dear families,

Firstly, I hope this newsletter finds you and your family safe and well. I want to thank all of our pupils for their efforts and tremendous levels of engagement with their online lessons so far this year. As you will no doubt be aware, it is a difficult time with many challenges for everyone, and teachers and other staff are available for pupils if they need any support. I would also like to thank families for their kind words and support for the children and their teachers.

This week saw the announcement that schools are likely to start wider opening to all pupils on 8th March at the earliest; we await further news on the logistics of full opening and how mass testing of pupils will operate within school. In the meantime, school remains open for vulnerable pupils and children of critical workers. If you would like to take up a school place under this scheme then please complete the form on the school website. Also, please remember the government guidance, that all those who are able to stay at home should do so.

## Remote Learning

We have been really impressed by the very high rates of attendance for the online lessons and are grateful to families for keeping the school office informed when a pupil is unwell and unable to attend for lesson registration ([attendance@sarchs.com](mailto:attendance@sarchs.com)). Letting us know in advance means that we do not need to follow up with texts and phone calls and that you are not interrupted during the day.

A reminder about the importance of good online behaviour and of following the guidelines that are set out in our [remote education policy](#).

We have had a small number of pupils who have been registering for a class and have then “gone missing” from the lesson, with no response to questions and not accessing the files required for that lesson. In these cases, teachers may mark a pupil as “absent” or record “lack of engagement” as a behaviour point. Texts will be sent if pupils are marked “absent” for lessons and families will be contacted where there are concerns over lack of engagement in class. We would encourage families to check *Insight* for attendance, rewards and behaviour on a regular basis.

*Mr M Wright, Headteacher*

## Children's Mental Health Week and Wellbeing Day

Monday 1st February is the start of Children's Mental Health Week in school and we have a range of activities planned, running alongside lessons each day; pupils should check emails for details. On **Friday 5th February the normal school timetable will be suspended** and pupils will take part in a wellbeing day. Pupils will register with their Form at the start of the day and be introduced to the activities that have been planned. Pupils will then work through the activities which all have a focus on wellbeing but will not be required to register for each session.

## Year 11 Update

Over recent weeks Ofqual (the organisation responsible for exams) and the Department of Education have been consulting about the Summer GCSE examinations, trying to find the best way to award exam grades this year.

The key points in the consultation are:

- Although exams are the fairest way we have of assessing what a student knows, the impact of this pandemic now means that it is not possible to have these exams this year.
- GCSEs and A and AS Level exams will not go ahead this summer - although it is important to note that preparation for vocational coursework and vocational examinations will continue as normal.
- Ofqual's consultation – alongside the Department of Education – will consider the options for alternatives to the exams to ensure every young person gets a fair grade for their work.
- A form of teacher-assessed grades, with training and support provided to schools will be used to ensure these grades are awarded fairly and consistently.

Once responses to the consultation have been considered, the Department for Education and Ofqual will decide how grades will be awarded. We will keep you up-to-date about the process as we receive further information.

However, the advice from Simon Lebus, the Chief Regulator for Examinations is clear;

*"We know that this is a difficult time for students, their parents and carers, teachers and trainers. Our message to students is this: please continue to engage as fully as you can in your education. That will be online for the majority of students. This will put you in the best position, whatever arrangements are made for your qualifications. Year 11 students should continue to engage as fully as they can in their education."*

Please remember that pupils and families should not contact teachers with regard to the awarding of grades. We are awaiting the response to the consultation before we determine the date for Year 11 Parents' Evening.

Year 11—keep up your great work!

## Online Access

If you are struggling with IT provision and internet access at home, please contact school via the [Remote Learning Agreement](#) form on the school website. We recommend the use of laptops and tablets rather than mobile phones as they provide a much better tool for remote learning. If you are struggling with poor internet connectivity please contact school on [info@sarchs.com](mailto:info@sarchs.com) or phone 01254 823362. We may be able to provide a mobile data SIM card so that a laptop or tablet can be "hot spotted" to access the internet.

## Parents' Evenings

We are reviewing the timing of Parents' Evenings this year and will publish an updated calendar in due course. We intend to use School Cloud, an online video conferencing service, for online appointments with your child's teachers which can be accessed via mobile phone, PC, tablet or laptop.

## 20-20-20 Vision

Recent guidance about screen time suggests that those working in front of a screen should look at an item more than 20 feet (6 metres) away, for 20 seconds, at least every 20 minutes. This reduces the strain on the muscles in the eyes. Please encourage regular breaks from screens at home.



## Free School Meals

Those families in receipt of Free School Meals should have received their vouchers up until February half term (£60 voucher). At this difficult time we recognise the struggles some families are facing and if we can be of any further assistance, such as signposting to local foodbanks, please contact us in school at [bleazardl@sarchs.com](mailto:bleazardl@sarchs.com).

## Rewards

It has been fabulous to see the number of reward points our pupils are receiving for their work. Over 100 pupils have received a certificate and email for being in the Weekly Top 10 in their Year group for reward points. Well done and keep up the good work.

## E-safety Week

Keep an eye on Twitter, Facebook and school email for information about National E-safety Week which starts in school on Monday 8th February 2021.



## Year 9 Options

The government's decision to push back school opening to 8th March at the earliest will require the Year 9 Options process to begin prior to pupils returning to school. Families will be sent information on course information and the options process prior to half term and we hope to be able to provide online appointments with subject teachers before final decisions are taken.

## Online Family Support

If you would like access to free, anonymous, online support for mental health and wellbeing visit [www.kooth.com](http://www.kooth.com) for helpful articles, personal experience and tips from the Kooth Team, made up of friendly and experienced individuals who want to help you.



This is a photo of a 2,000 year old Italian Olive Tree called The Thinking Tree.

## Chaplaincy Challenge: The Thinking Tree

"The Lord God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food." Genesis 2: 9

If trees could talk...

What would they say about climate change?

How can we make our world a better place?

I'd love to hear your amazing ideas. Send me a message, write a poem, make a poster ...

email them to Anita at [cobba@sarchs.com](mailto:cobba@sarchs.com)