



18<sup>th</sup> December 2020

Dear Parents,

### Staggered return to school and the introduction of COVID testing in schools from next term

At the end of a particularly busy and challenging term for all of us, I would like to update you on the Academy's response to the government announcements this week on the staggered return to school and COVID testing which you may have heard about in the media.

#### Staggered return

Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January has been set as an additional INSET day, following DfE advice to schools to help prepare staff for the new arrangements around school COVID testing (see below). This means that both Bishop Walsh and St Edmund Campion schools will be closed to all children on this day. Primary schools will continue to be open for all children as usual from Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021. All children, except Year 11 and 13, children whose parents are critical workers and vulnerable children will not attend school from Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January to Friday 8<sup>th</sup> January.

Parents are asked to complete the separate Parentmail form to confirm if they are a critical worker as defined by the government and if they will be taking up the offer of a place at school for the first week of term. Please complete this by Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2020. Your child's school has already identified children who are vulnerable and parents will have been contacted about this separately. All children in all year groups are expected to attend as usual from Monday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2020.

#### COVID Lateral Flow testing in schools

We are pleased to announce that we will be taking advantage of the government's scheme to roll out a testing programme for staff and students in our schools next term. This is why both secondary schools are taking Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January as an additional INSET day. We appreciate that this is short notice for parents and we thank you for your support for our schools who are working very hard to respond to the latest information from the DfE in the last few days as a significant amount of planning has to be done to ensure we are fully prepared.

We will be commencing the Lateral Flow Tests towards the beginning of next term. Specific arrangements on how this will work, including the timescales will be communicated from your child's school at the beginning of next term. Please see the attached information about these tests. We strongly encourage everyone to participate as it will ensure that we can reduce the spread of infection and keep more children in school during the next two terms. We will not be able to administer tests without your consent so we are asking all parents to complete the consent form which will be sent to you via Parentmail early next week.

Finally, I am sure that you will all join me in thanking the staff at your child's school for their unwavering commitment to ensuring that students have been kept safe and given the best possible education to enable them to catch up on any lost learning this term.

Thank you again for your support and, on behalf of the St John Paul II Multi Academy Company, I wish you all a happy, safe and peaceful Christmas.

Yours truly



M. A Emery

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#### St. John Paul II Multi Academy

Registered Office: c/o Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, Earlsbury Gardens, Birmingham, B20 3AE

E: enquiry@sjp2.net | T: 01218278664 | W: johnpaulii.co.uk.

Acting Catholic Senior Executive Leader (CSEL): Mr M. Emery

Company House Registered No. 08706247

