



From the Headmaster - 12 June 2020

Good afternoon, I hope my email this week finds you well, and that you are, as I am, looking forward to a little sunshine between the rain showers this weekend – a metaphor perhaps for the current situation and a reminder to look for the positives wherever we possibly can. If nothing else, this pandemic may have enabled us all to appreciate the simpler things in life.

Plans for September

As we begin to plan for September, can we assume that it will be business as usual? The answer, in short, is probably no; it is likely that Covid-19 will be here for many months to come and if social distancing in schools is not radically reduced, the reality is that we will not be able to open to all pupils until the public health advice is that it is safe to teach groups of up to 30. Also, the risk of infection spikes in the colder weather, when more people are indoors could mean that schools may have to close at short notice in some areas. The implication, then, is that a blended, rota-based approach to learning may be the norm. I want to assure parents that we are doing all we can to plan to have as many students in school as often as possible. However, the school will continue to follow the government's advice. Nevertheless, given the substantial challenges and complexities that a blended approach to learning creates, we will endeavour to work as hard as we can to provide the best possible experience for our pupils. It is likely that we will not be able to inform parents of our plans for September until much later this term and that our plans may have to change as government advice and statutory guidance changes.

Face-to-face sessions for Year 10 and Year 12

Each student in Years 10 and 12, and their parents, should have received an email from either Mr Tilley and Mr Daniel or Mr O'Neill and Mr Lynch about the plans for the face-to-face sessions outlining what each student can expect - including the number and length of any student periods in school, student group sizes, timings and other key information. I would like to thank all the staff for their painstaking preparation to enable this to take place. Please do get in touch if you require further information:

Year 12	Mr B O'Neill	bjo@strs.org.uk
Head of Sixth Form	Matthew Lynch	mtl@strs.org.uk
Year 10	Mr D Tilley	dpt@strs.org.uk
Head of Upper School	Peter Daniell	pmd@strs.org.uk

Remote learning and further use of Microsoft Teams

Each student in Years 7, 8, 9 and 10 should have received several video messages from their respective Heads of Year, hopefully helping them to feel connected to the school and outlining the key expectations regarding further use of use of 'Teams' for pupils in Key Stage 3 and Year 10 following the successful trial of Teams lessons in Year 12. I would like to thank parents of pupils in Years 7 -10 who have accessed their Parent Gateway accounts to give their consent for their son to take part in these online sessions and also to thank teachers for putting on these sessions alongside setting work via Satchel One (ShowMyHomework).

Summer Catch-up

We heard yesterday that an extended catch-up plan for England's schools is to be launched for the summer and beyond, to help pupils get back on track amid school shutdowns. We have no detail of this other than the Prime Minister's comments that there will be "a huge amount of catch up for pupils over the summer". For the time being, my strong advice is that pupils should be endeavouring to do the work currently being set, communicating with their teachers via email and Satchel One (SMHW) and participating in Teams lessons where available.

This pandemic undoubtedly continues to place strain on pupils, parents and colleagues, and the next few weeks will continue to be extremely difficult for everyone, but we must focus on the things that matter - those things that are not easily measurable but are critically important. There are still lots of very tricky decisions and logistical choices that lie ahead, but I suspect one day we'll look back and take immense pride in the fact that we were able to work together and to meet these challenges head on. As the artist Peter McIntyre said: "Confidence comes not from always being right, but from not fearing to be wrong."

I will of course endeavour to update parents as soon as any new information becomes available, and I am confident that we can as a school community continue to navigate our way through this strange period with thought, care, empathy and resolve. To raise spirits, past and present members of the School's Brass Band have joined together for a performance of the School song, The Tommy Psalm – now available on our website:

<https://strschool.co.uk/news/School-Brass-Band-Performs-Lockdown-Tommy-Psalms/04f10b-8ab0-4f1b-b90b-1d04645c1f06>

In such unprecedented times, I would like, once again, to thank parents and other members of the school community

for their continued support.

Facebook: www.facebook.com/SirThomasRichsSchool

Twitter: [@strsglos](https://twitter.com/strsglos)

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "M. & Morgan".

Matthew Morgan,
Headmaster

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