



26<sup>th</sup> March 2021

Dear Parents and carers,

With only one more week left at school before the Easter holidays, time is ticking on at break neck speed! Our pupils have returned to school since the latest lockdown and have all impressed us with their positivity and wonderful attitude. They are working hard and really trying their best in all that they do – so well done and a huge thank you for all your hard work. We are in school until Thursday evening of Holy week and father is coming in on Tuesday morning to bless all of the children. They have been working really hard this week on their liturgies and Lenten reflections and s next week will be a beautiful moment to pause and reflect on the last year and then as part of that what will we all look forward to in the coming year.

### Up to date COVID guidance

The following [link](#) has been updated with the most up to date national guidance with regards the relaxing of the national lockdown. Please use it to check what you can and cannot do next week as the rules change on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2021.

### Covid Testing

Just a quick update about LFD and PCR testing for your information. If your older child receives a positive LFD test whilst taking part in the senior school testing programme then they and all the members of the family have to isolate for 10 days regardless of if they then access a negative PCR test. If you or your child receives a positive LFD test at home but a subsequent negative PCR test then your child can return to school and not have to isolate for 10 days. It is essential, however to realise that an LFD test cannot overrule a positive PCR test, if anyone in your household has a positive PCR test then you must all isolate for a minimum of 10 days. I appreciate that these rules seem arbitrary but they are from the national guidance schools have been asked to follow.

Can I also ask that if anyone in your household is experiencing any symptoms then please book a PCR Covid test via the NHS and whilst waiting for the result then please can all the family members please isolate? Please DO NOT send your child into school if ANYONE in your household has any symptoms until that person has access and received a negative PCR test, a negative LFD is no guarantee of a negative result for symptomatic people. Please always help us by being cautious and accessing a PCR test if you have any concerns about symptoms at all, I really appreciate all your support in helping us keep school COVID free.

### Birthdays

Can I ask all parents to ensure that if you want to give out sweets to celebrate your child's birthday you do so outside of school? This is because our in school Risk Assessment does not allow for items to be handed out to groups of children. Please do not ask teachers to give out

bags of sweets, party invitations or whole class group birthday cards as you will be told no. I appreciate your support with this.

### **Items being quarantined**

Some of the younger children are very keen to bring home pictures and models they have made in school – I have agreed with class teachers that items must be quarantined in school for a minimum of 48-72hours prior to sending home.

### **Cards**

Cards such as Mother's Day and Easter cards are being made in school and quarantined for at least 72hours prior to being sent home – we feel that these yearly markers are essential to help support our pupils in maintaining some normality in their lives during this current time.

### **Changes to the Test and Trace support payment for parents**

Parents and carers of children who have been advised to self-isolate by their education setting or by NHS Test and Trace are now able to apply for a [Test and Trace Support Payment](#) or discretionary payment of £500, if they meet the eligibility criteria. The extension of the Test and Trace Support Payment scheme, which is administered by district and unitary local authorities in England, ensures that parents receive the financial support they need if they are unable to attend work due to childcare responsibilities. Parents and carers should apply to their local authority to receive a payment. Applications for the Test and Trace Support Payment scheme are made via the local authority in which the parent or carer resides, not the local authority where the setting is situated, if these are different.

To be eligible applicants must meet all of the criteria that:

- they are the parent or guardian of a child or young person in the same household and need to take time off work to care for them while they self-isolate. This is limited to one parent or guardian per household for the child or young person's self-isolation period
- they are employed or self-employed
- they cannot work from home while undertaking caring responsibilities and will lose income as a result
- they meet all the other means-tested eligibility criteria for a Test and Trace Support Payment or locally determined criteria for a discretionary payment

That their child or young person:

- is aged 15 or under (or 25 or under with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC)) and normally attends an education or childcare setting
- has been told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace or by their education or childcare setting because they have been identified as a close contact of someone who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19)

### **RSE Consultation**

As part of nationally updated guidance from the Department of Education all schools need to teach relationship education to their pupils. In line with most other Catholic schools we have decided to opt for the TenTen resources which have been produced in line with Bishops Conference guidance and the Department of Education. The plans are also fully supported and endorsed by the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle. This ensures that as a Catholic school we are following fully endorsed programmes of study which comply with both the National Curriculum and fit with our Catholic Ethos, as set down by our full Governing Body.

Links to the programme will be available on our school website after the Easter holidays for your information.

With all of our collective prayers we are hoping that the vaccine will bring some much longed for light at the end of the tunnel. Soon we can start meeting friends, families and reconnect with loved ones. I continue to keep you and all of your families in my thoughts and prayers during this challenging time, as we are not quite there yet.

Best wishes,

*A D Thorpe*

Mrs A. D. Thorpe  
Head teacher