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St Margaret Mary's Letter: National Lockdown/COVID Update

Dear Children, Parents and Carers,

Firstly, welcome back after what I hope was a restful, but very different half-term break. As always it has been lovely to see & work with the children during this week. As I am sure you are aware though, we have a number of children who over the last four days have had to work remotely, as part of having to self-isolate from home. I know how difficult & disruptive that this is. I would like to express my thanks to the parents who supported this.

National Lockdown: I am sure you are all well aware of a second national lockdown now coming into action from yesterday until the 2nd December. I know that this is restrictive & far from ideal but it is really important that we work together to implement what is being asked of us. In doing this we will give ourselves the best chance of being able to keep our school safe, open & provide a quality education for all of our children during these difficult times. This is why I am asking for these simple things taken from

Gov.UK & DfE Guidance:

"Do not send your child to school if:

- *They have Covid-19 symptoms (high temperature, cough, loss of taste or smell)*
- *If your child has tested positive for Covid-19*
- *Somebody in your household has Covid-19 symptoms and is booking a test/awaiting results*
- *Somebody in your household has tested positive for Covid-19*
- *Your child has been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for Covid-19*
- *Your child has been in close contact with someone who has developed Covid-19 symptoms and is booking a test/awaiting results*

If your child is asked to self-isolate this means:

- *They should stay at home for 14 days after last contact with the person who has tested positive.*
- *Do not go to school or public areas and do not use public transport or taxis.*
- *Do not go outside to buy food or other essentials.*
- *Any exercise must be taken within your home or garden.*

This will help protect your family, friends and the NHS. Self-isolating is very important as you can develop symptoms up to 10 days after being in contact with someone who has tested positive".

I know how difficult it is, but it is really important that this is followed, as if not this can very quickly & easily result in a higher risk of transmission, classes & the whole school having to self-isolate for two weeks & loved ones potentially becoming ill. Everyone wants to avoid this, so I ask that everyone supports what we are being asked to do as a school community.



In school we are doing all that we can to make sure that the children stay in their class bubbles. This is when they are working, playing & having a lunch. Your children & the staff are doing an amazing job to ensure this & I am very proud of them. Please help us & them by supporting this outside of school as well.

Shielding: As I am sure you are aware shielding for the clinically extremely vulnerable returned yesterday. I know that this affects a small number of staff, children & families within our school. The guidance for children is that given all of the risks school is still the best place for them & they should attend when well. I understand concerns at this time & if you do need any support or reassurance please contact us. For staff & adults, if you are in this group you must work from home, particularly in an education setting. I ask for your patience & understanding with this, as school supports & covers these staff members who it applies to. Thank-you.

Social Distancing & Wearing Masks: Thank-you to all of you in supporting social distancing around the gates during the drop-off & collection times. It is really appreciated. A number of parents have expressed concern that they are not being given enough space around the gate & that some parents are not queuing respectfully when collecting their child. I am very proud of how we all work together at St Margaret Mary's. With this in mind I ask that you please maintain an awareness of this & those who are waiting patiently in the lines. Staff will always do their best to safely & quickly ensure that you are seen & your child is led/directed to you. If we do get it wrong on occasions, it will never be intentional & apologies in advance.

We are also asking & encouraging all of our EYFS Parents/Carers to wear masks when entering the playground next week. Again, given the situation we find ourselves in nationally & locally this will help us all to stay safe & open for our children.

Home Learning: A reminder that 'Home Learning' is an expectation **for all** of our children from Nursery to Year Six & will be set for every child when they have to self-isolate. This is our expectation at St Margaret Mary's & it is that of the government, for all schools across the country. As such, staff across the school have & work so hard to provide the best home learning that we can. I know that it is not perfect & we will be surveying you again on this, to get your views & opinions. Remember we cannot replicate a classroom & every home situation is different. I really do understand the difficulties that this brings, particularly for our very youngest children, but please support your child & us in ensuring that the children are involved in their learning from home. They have already missed a great deal of learning time over the last 8 months. We need to do all we can together to support this when we have to work from home. Again, this is a reminder for us all to work together in minimising the risk of classes being sent home. On occasions your child may be taught by a different member of staff. This is because staff are self-isolating if they or family members develop symptoms.

SeeSaw Set-Up: A reminder once again asking all parents to activate the '**Family Link**' to your child's Seesaw account. These were all sent home two weeks ago & are really important to supporting not only homework but also remote learning as & when it is required. We have helped a few parents with queries this week But we can see that a number of parents have not activated this so far. Please can you find time to do this & make yourself familiar with this. Using the Family Link, you will be able to receive notifications when work is set & when feedback is given, as well as when your child has submitted their work. You will also be able to communicate with your child's teacher, if needed. You will need the 'Seesaw Family' app and it works in the same way as your child's account (i.e. a QR code or 12 letter code is given to login). A further guide is available on the school website for further, helpful information. A reminder to please ensure that contact details are kept up-to-date within the office, so that we can communicate via text & email effectively.

Thank-you for your support & understanding with all of the above matters. I look forward to writing to you on Monday to share some of the exciting work & topics taking place around the school over the last week. I hope you have a restful weekend.
Take care & God Bless!

Mr Sutton
Headteacher

