

St Matthew's Academy
Jacks Road
SALTCOATS
KA21 5NT
Head Teacher - Mr S Colligan
Tel: 01294 606680



Our Ref:

Date: 01/06/20

Dear Parents/Carer

As we embark upon our new timetable, I felt it was appropriate to contact you to offer what information I can during these challenging times. I am grateful to you all for the many positive comments that you have sent to staff over the past few weeks. I know you appreciate the consistent support that has been provided to your children through Show My Homework and Teams, our online learning platforms. Staff have been working very hard every day to ensure pupils can maintain their progress during this period of lockdown.

On behalf of the school, I want to thank you for the support you have shown your child during this time. I know how difficult it can be to assist with remote learning and would like to thank you for all of your work in this area. Teaching whilst fulfilling all other demands from home is not easy and I know from personal experience that trying to teach your own children can be particularly challenging. There is no substitute for in-school learning but I think all members of our school community can be proud of the way we have worked together to continue learning and teaching for our children. With the new timetable now in place all pupils should be working online with new class groups and teachers. Please continue to encourage them to access all the materials that are being provided.

You will be aware that staff across Scotland are now in the process of returning to schools. Senior members of staff are putting arrangements in place to allow small groups of staff to start to return to school in the weeks ahead prior to the end of term. This is to allow for planning and preparation for August.

Any return to the school building is dependent on effective approaches to health and safety by all. Physical distancing and other safe practices will be required. In order to implement the current 2m recommendations we will need to consider the physical space in the school carefully. It is anticipated that there will be a blended approach of in school and at home learning in the new term. I am all too aware of the potential disruption for many families this will cause and I apologise for this but given the current physical distancing recommendations from the government, I am unable to have all pupils in school at the same time. I am currently working with colleagues from across the authority to consider how we take this blended approach forward. I will provide more details as soon as I have them.

We are reviewing our previously planned events and seeking ways to offer alternatives. For example, our planned transition events for Primary 7 are being carried out online via social media and departments are providing transition lessons in partnership with associate and non-associate primaries. Based on the strong response we have received from P7 this is proving very popular and we are looking forward to this new cohort of pupils joining us in August.

Whilst no Junior Awards ceremony can take place, it remains our intention to recognise the achievements of the young people in S1-S3. Staff are currently reviewing pupil learning with a view to nominating awards for excellence and effort in the Broad General Education (S1-S3).

It was particularly disappointing not to be able to celebrate the Graduation Mass with our S6. During this ceremony, awards such as the Kilmarnock Cup are issued to pupils who have shown outstanding commitment to our school values. I feel it is essential that, as is our tradition, this will be awarded to one of our S6 students in 2020 and we are currently exploring ways to present this award amongst others.

Pupils in S4/5 who had previously suggested the time had come to move on from Saint Matthew's Academy may now find that their plans have changed. I would ask that they contact their Principal Teacher Pastoral Support to discuss any concerns they may have.

We have been using our social media channels to provide information about the work of the school throughout this time and I would encourage you to continue to follow these for regular updates.

I know this is a very challenging time for members of our community and my prayers are with those who have experienced loss and illness. Please be assured that my priority continues to be that Saint Matthew's Academy delivers the very best educational experience we can for the young people in our care. We will continue to contact you by text and social media to share our plans as they develop and will provide as much information as possible prior to the start of the new term.

Yours sincerely

S Colligan

Head Teacher