



ST MARY'S COLLEGE

22nd October 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

It is finally half-term which I know will bring a welcome break for staff and students alike. In many ways it has been a long 7 weeks, yet it has also passed quickly at times. As a school, we continue to work together as a community as we navigate Covid and settle into routines. It was a great relief for me to be able to disband bubbles, allow students to go to classrooms as normal and staff to be able to teach in their rooms. I am sure that your child comes home feeling tired after having crossed such a big site many times during the day!

However, we must remain vigilant and be ready to make reasonable adjustments. As you will no doubt have seen, cases are rising significantly across the country and in our own city. The government are watching and studying the current situation carefully. At St Mary's College we will pay close attention to the government guidelines, but I will not hesitate to take action if, in consultation with Public Health England, it is felt that specific measures are right for our school and our children.

Bearing this in mind, can I please stress the importance of your child still taking their Lateral Flow Test during half-term and especially on the Sunday evening before they return to school on Monday 1st November. This regular testing is the cornerstone of us being able to keep our community safe and helps to ensure that the school can continue to operate as normally as possible.

Furthermore, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all families for their support this first half-term. Attendance across the school has been significantly above the national average and other schools in the city. This does not happen by chance; it is testament to the commitment of our students and their families to learning that allows attendance to remain so high.

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Behaviour has also been excellent – especially when taking into account some of the changes over the last few weeks. I have been especially impressed by the determination shown by Year 11, the tenacity shown by Year 8 (who had never accessed the full site before) and the resilience of Year 7 who were not able to have a Transition Week but have settled in amazingly. Year 10 also have terminal exams this year and are working hard. Moreover, I enjoy visiting Year 9 during registration time as they are always focused and ready for the day. The 6th Form goes from strength to strength- indeed this year we have recruited our highest numbers ever and students who are new to our college are a most welcome addition.

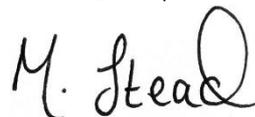
Looking forward to the next half-term, there will be a clear focus on exercise books, the work students are producing and the feedback that they receive. Please support your child by looking in their exercise books when they bring them home, congratulating them on their progress and encouraging them where there are areas for development. Please remember you can always contact a subject teacher, should you wish to discuss anything regarding your child's progress in a specific curriculum area.

Also, I am thrilled to attach Issue 2 of the SMC Newsletter, I hope you enjoy. The front page is dedicated to our fantastic Safeguarding Team and the great work they do, day in, day out. There is also a link to key information regarding harmful sexual behaviour and sexual harassment in schools – something we have a zero-tolerance policy towards. This issue also celebrates the many achievements of our exceptional students. Last of all, perhaps you might want to find a little time to put aside as a family and say the prayer together, giving you chance to reflect whilst taking a moment out of your busy lives.

Finally, I want to express my thanks to all students and families for making me feel so welcome in my new role at St Mary's. Coming to work here is a joy and a privilege. It is your child who is extremely important in making that possible for me and all the staff here as they have such a fundamental part to play in our school. I am looking forward to spending some time next week with my 3 sons, Mr Stead and our 2 new boy kittens (I still remain the only female in the house)!

I wish you a wonderful half-term break.

God Bless,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M. Stead". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial 'M'.

Mrs M Stead