



Salesian School

Enlightening minds, uplifting hearts

Headteacher: Mr J Kibble

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Dear All,

Under normal circumstances, we would be preparing to spend today celebrating the Feast of Mary Help of Christians, a feast which was so important to Don Bosco and has been to all Salesians since. We would be looking forward to Mass on the yard and an early finish, as well as a final Mass, assembly and celebrations for Year 11 and a final Mass and reception for Year 13 students and their parents, all before going off for a much needed half term break.

Whilst much of this won't be happening today for obvious reasons, we are delighted to say that in an effort to preserve at least some of this tradition, Fr. Kevin will be live streaming Mass from the Chapel at 2pm today and you can join this celebration live via the [Salesian School Facebook](#) page. I hope you will take this opportunity to stop and celebrate with the rest of the worldwide Salesian community all that we have to be thankful for regardless of the current challenges we face.

Meanwhile, despite all the publicity regarding a return to school for students in Years 10 and 12 starting from 1st June, it would appear that this will not now be happening. This is because a) we still haven't received any further guidance on how we are expected to do it; b) the current general guidance makes it impossible for us to offer any such provision effectively; c) other changes to the guidance will prevent us from having the capacity to do it; d) this is a bigger issue than just education.

To expand on this:

- The current [guidance](#) states that in order to reduce the risk of transmission of the virus, students should be taught in groups of no more than 15. These groups, or bubbles, including any staff who teach them, should not come into contact with students from any other bubble. Whilst in theory, this could work in a primary setting, with subject specialists needing to move between groups, you can see how this model will not allow us to offer any meaningful education in a secondary setting.
- Despite there being no secondary specific guidance published, there has been another important change in government policy this week: Critical workers (the list of eligible professions can be found [here](#)) and the parents of "vulnerable" children, are now being actively encouraged to send their children back to school. Given the significant numbers of children this applies to at our school, it just isn't possible to accommodate all of them as well as the all the students in Years 10 and 12 and stick to the rules.
- Beyond all that, this is not just about education, there is also a bigger public health issue about how to keep all these students socially distant before and after school, on public transport and anywhere else they may go on the way to and from school.

In short, the guidance will need to change before schools will be in a position to welcome back students in Years 10 and 12. They are due to be reviewed on 28th May and again, two weeks after that. However, in the meantime, we will not be able to offer provision in school for any students other than those who are deemed vulnerable or whose parents are critical workers. Everyone here is missing the students terribly and really looking forward to welcoming them back so we are really not very happy about all this. However, our number one priority is the safety and well-being of everyone who makes up our school community, so we must follow the guidance.

For those who are eligible to send their children back to school and wish to take up a place, we would ask you to complete and return the attached form as soon as possible and preferably by the end of the day to attendace@salesian.surrey.sch.uk. Up until now, provision has been offered on a day-to-day basis, going forward, we are asking those families who take up the offer to commit to full-time education. We would ask families not to see this as something to "dip in and out" of, in order to facilitate effective teaching and learning as well as for all sorts of practical reasons, we need the children who are coming in, to be in every day (with the normal exceptions for illness etc obviously). Any family already making use of the provision will need to reapply so we can plan appropriately.

The school has remained open for small numbers of students throughout the lockdown and from 1st June we will be expanding this provision to accommodate up to 120 students. Whilst we would encourage those who are eligible to return to school, it would be helpful if for the first two weeks, those parents who were in two minds



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about sending their children back, perhaps kept them at home for a little longer whilst we established a routine with a manageable number of students.

It is our aim to accommodate returning students in year group bubbles of up to 15 students. In order to do this according to the guidance, students within each bubble and any staff members we assign to the bubble will not be permitted to come into contact with students from any other bubble. Assigned to each bubble will be 5 teachers working on a rota basis. For the most part they will be supporting students to complete the home learning tasks but they may also spend some time teaching the group bespoke lessons where their subject specialism is relevant to all members of the group.

Whilst we believe it is time for those who can to start getting on with the “new normal”, we also appreciate that many children and their families will be anxious about a return to school. Where this is the case, we would encourage to share your concerns with us when you submit your form so we can make the best possible preparation for welcoming the student in question back in. As we keep saying, it is the students’ well-being, safety and happiness that is our number one consideration. I hope that it will be of some comfort to know that we have had a number of students who have attended school throughout the lockdown period so far and they have thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

With regards to practical arrangements for those returning to school:

- A full risk assessment has been carried out
- Procedures will be in place to promote social distancing but you should know that this cannot be guaranteed in any school setting
- All provision will continue to operate at Guildford Road, the College remains closed
- We will be operating a normal school day from 8.50am to 3.30pm, although we may need to stagger start and finish times as numbers grow
- Students will need to bring a packed lunch (we are hoping to reopen the canteen from 15th June)
- Students will be permitted to wear mufti (to be reviewed for 15th June)
- Government guidance discourages the wearing of PPE in school other than for those involved in administering first aid or personal care, however, those who wish to wear it will not be prevented from doing so

For those who are not yet eligible to return, I am truly sorry. Whoever would have thought so many students would be pining for school? I hope however that the letter you will have received earlier in the week from Mr Gower about the enhanced provision for home learning from 1st June has encouraged you, I know we here are very much looking forward to the opportunity for more interaction with you all. We hope also that this will take some of the pressure off families who are struggling to work alongside supporting the students’ learning.

By lunchtime today, every family should have received a phone call from the school this week. If you haven’t please contact your child’s Head of Year via email so we can get in touch with you today.

Thank you to all those who have made contributions to the newsletter which will be published today. Please look out for the outcome of the consultation on the timings of the school day which are contained within this edition.

Now it is half term and it is time to stop. Students should not be doing any school work for the next 9 days and parents should be having a break from nagging students to do school work. We may not be off on the exciting holidays we had planned but we should take this time to count our blessings and enjoy the simple pleasures of rest, relaxation, sunshine and time with the people we love.

God bless,

James Kibble
Salesian School