12th March 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

**Thank you.** Thanks to your commitment to work with us and the maturity of our students we ‘did it’ together! We have made it to Friday and finally successfully completed the first round of student COVID tests, welcoming all year groups safely back into school and are well on our way with the second round. There is a sense of tangible hope that the future is bright as I walk round school and see students happily engaged in their learning. Thank you to parents and carers for all your support in getting us all to this moment.

**Test results.** I would like to reassure we you that we would always call you directly as soon as possible if your child tested positive. We batch upload test results to the NHS data base and I am aware that there is sometimes a time delay in receiving results with parents receiving confusing emails about their child being ‘registered’. There is no need to worry about this. Assume your child’s test in negative unless we tell you otherwise. The process of testing has identified one positive case within our community and the family were informed within 40 minutes of the test. The test subject had no symptoms at the time and had no ‘contacts’ in school. This meant that one household’s selfless act of isolation has arrested the spread of the virus and prevented any need to close a bubble within school.

**Uniform and masks:** Thank you to parents and carers for supporting us in ensuring that their child has full uniform and a face covering. Please remind your child each morning to have their face covering or lanyard (in the case of exemptions) for use during the day. At break times on the yard and in the canteen we have noticed that the wearing of face coverings in school has for some been used as an excuse to leave a nose piercing in all day. As you can imagine asking a child to touch their nose and remove this during the day increases the risk of COVID. Many children question why it is important that we insist that they are removed. The reason is that it is a uniform rule set by Governors and we need to guard from the gradual erosion of school rules. My experience is that students who are perceived to get away with breaking a rule usually start pushing the boundaries in other things and we are keen to ensure that the high behaviour standards we have all worked hard to achieve in school are maintained. So please ask you child to remove piercings before they leave the home. Good discipline and good teaching ultimately results in good outcomes for young people.

**Home testing:** Watch out next week for guidance on home testing. Students with consent will be invited to pick up a home testing kit after their third test in school for the purpose of home testing. We will share details of how to report the outcome of the test to school and to the NHS. As ever any positive cases for coronavirus need to be reported to us immediately via our emergency email address [safeguarding@st-josephs.bolton.sch.uk](mailto:safeguarding@st-josephs.bolton.sch.uk). This email address is monitored out of school hours and should only be used for urgent safeguarding issues but it allows us to track and trace as soon as possible to keep everyone safe.

**Getting ahead:** As learning continues and returns to some sense of normality we ask you to encourage your child with their home learning to embed what is taught in the classroom. Our ‘get ahead’ (psychologically better than the governments phrase of ‘catch-up’!) curriculum is in place and over the next few weeks you will see P6 bucket list activities returning where it is safe to do so. Initially, these will be in place as intervention to support class learning.

**Heroes:** Finally, next Friday we celebrate St Joseph’s day, our school patron. Considering that he was Jesus’ earthly father we know very little about St Joseph and in some ways is an unsung hero. On Friday we will be sharing some activities focused on boosting positive mental health by celebrating unsung heroes in our community. We will be looking to affirm every young person and adult by considering how they might be a hero in the lives of others. Speaking of heroes, this weekend we celebrate mothers and all those who mother or care for someone. Let’s make sure we honour someone who has had a ‘mothering impact’ in our lives.

Take Care and God Bless!

*Tony McCabe*

*Headteacher*