20th May 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

**Full School Opening: Friday 21st May – We did it!** I am pleased to be able to tell you that we are in a position to welcome back all students tomorrow (Friday 21st May).  We have still got 7 classrooms out of action, but staff have re-purposed 7 spaces as temporary classrooms to get students back into school for face to face learning as quickly as possible.  The final green light was given today following a fire safety audit of our new arrangements, meaning that we have managed to deliver on our plans to get all students back before the end of the week.  One area of school will need to have an evacuation run through as a training exercise for staff tomorow morning to test our arrangements.

On Monday morning we expressed to the flood recovery team that we were committed to bringing all students back before the week was over.  The flood recovery team nodded with a supportive smile and offered their full support for our vision with a note to caution our optimism and manage our expectations. With their support, we ‘dreamt the impossible’ and in doing so ‘achieved beyond our wildest expectations.’  We have proven to ourselves that St Joseph’s is a place where anything can be achieved if you work hard enough at it.  I would like to personally thank three members of the site team (Mark, Paul and Elaine), who were on site within minutes of the flood hitting our school, the senior leaders who were amongst the first to put on full PPE to tackle the floods, the pastoral team, the teaching assistants and the teachers who ‘mucked in’ between setting work and live streaming, the technicians for servicing virtual learning and also setting up new learning stations and work desks for staff, our insurance company and all their partner contractors, diocesan and LA support, the many volunteers who donated tools, provided refreshments or helped in the clean-up outside school and for members of the community who offered such positive words of encouragement on facebook or messages sent into school.  Your support made us all the more determined to do it for the good of our young people.

Students should enter school tomorrow by the normal student entrance.  The bottom trunk corridor is now back in use but we ask students to stay away from the 7 affected classrooms and the 11 offices that are labelled ‘Out of use.’  We ask everyone in the building to keep their eyes out and report anything that may turn into a trip hazard as flood damaged surfaces may deteriorate.  This will be under constant monitoring. May I also ask that all students wear a face covering in school and do a LFD test before returning to school on Friday.  I am sure no one wants me to send out any instructions to isolate for contacts of students that might subsequently show symptoms of COVID after the challenging week we have already had!

This year our community has been battered but certainly not beaten.  Thank you for all your continued support for making our school a place where amazing things happen.  In Old Testament times Noah led God’s people out of the floods and Moses continued the journey through the dessert to reach the Promised Land.  Our prayer is that this same God will continue to bless our community and allow each young person reach the promised land of their own success.

Take Care and God Bless!

*Tony McCabe*