

8 January 2021

Dear Parents/Carers, Students, Governors, Old Olavians

Headteacher's Newsletter 94

May I start by wishing you all a happy and safe New Year. I hope that the Christmas break was a good opportunity to relax and re-energise.

You will be aware the Prime Minister instructed English schools to close in his announcement on Monday night and for children to learn remotely until February half term. We plan to follow students' existing timetables. All pupils have a working 'saintolaves.net' email address for them to contact staff if they are unable to access work. We were unaware that the school was going to close having worked hard over the holidays to organise the Stage 2 Test and mass testing for students and staff. Thank you for the time and work students have done preparing for mocks exams, which are now not able to take place next week. I know many students would have worked extremely hard in preparation for these.

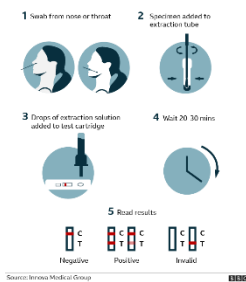
The Government have also made it clear schools should remain open for vulnerable children and the children of critical workers. If you are classified as a critical worker and would like your child to be on site to access their remote learning, let us know as soon as possible via email to either Mrs Maxwell (rmaxwe@saintolaves.net) or Mr Birtchnell (mbirtchnell@saintolaves.net) including details of your occupation and employer. Please contact us also if you feel your child is vulnerable and they would benefit from being on site. Do not send your child into school until you receive confirmation from us that we are expecting them. Please would you inform us if your son or daughter is not engaging with remote learning or you have difficulties with your Wi-Fi or accessing a laptop. We have contacted you to find out whether this is the case but please make us aware directly if you have missed this.

During the school closure, Form Tutors and the Pastoral Team will still be able to provide pastoral support to pupils and should be the first point of contact for non-subject specific concerns. Contact details can be found on the school website. Please be sure to include your child's full name and form group to ensure the message reaches the intended recipient. In addition to the pastoral support structures common to all year groups (of Form Tutor, Head of Year and Assistant Headteacher), the School has other avenues of pastoral support. The School's Chaplain, School Counsellor, and Safeguarding Team can offer additional support and advice for students facing a range of difficulties. We will continue to still make referrals to external agencies as deemed necessary.

As the lockdown takes hold once more, we have been made aware of a free support course, which we can share with parents and guardians. The content of this course covers tips and tricks for parents to direct, inspire and feel in control of a child's learning at home. The course can be found by following this link: <https://www.guideeducation.co.uk/parentsupport>.



How the rapid tests work



I am sure you would like to know that we were ready to begin mass testing this week having worked tirelessly over the holidays to find a workforce to administer the tests. I am so grateful to ex-Captains of School, Manav Babel, Shrishti Rentalala, Amro Fadel and Sarah El-Toukhy who within 48 hours had put together a team of over 60 willing volunteers using Old Olavians to help support the testing programme. It was so refreshing during these challenging times to hear from one student who said: *'I'm also sure it goes without saying that any time Saint Olave's needs help, I'll always be willing to do my best to be there.'* It

makes me immensely proud to be part of such a wonderful community with amazing students. We have begun testing staff who are currently in school and further details about mass testing will be shared with you again when we are due to return to school. Please remember to continue to notify us as soon as possible if your son or daughter receives a positive Covid-19 test result during the time when the school is closed.

With regards examinations, the latest news is the Government does not think exams in the summer will go ahead as planned. They will accordingly be working with Ofqual to consult rapidly to put in place alternative arrangements, which will be based on teacher assessment, that will allow students to progress fairly.

The safety and wellbeing of our community remains a top priority for everyone at St. Olave's Grammar School. Thank you for your understanding, patience, and continuing support. I would like to thank all the staff for everything that they have done to keep our school going throughout this difficult crisis so far. Our collective commitment to all of our children has never been more important and I know that we will all pull together to support each other in the weeks ahead. What the future will be looking like, no one can be certain, but what I do know is that the values of our school will shine through all our endeavours. We will continue to update you when we receive any further information, especially around the reopening of the school.



Congratulations to School Captain, Rose Hind, who given the exceptional strength of her paper application to Pembroke College, Cambridge, was offered a place without being called for interview. This is the first time we are aware of this happening to any applicant from St. Olave's. Well done to Rose on this outstanding achievement. Further Oxbridge successes will be shared over the coming weeks, but we are also aware of other outstanding applications through the UCAS process and well done to all our students on securing places on a wide variety of courses and

universities.

I would like to highlight further student achievements that have taken place over the holidays:

- Hardiv Harshakumar, Year 12, successfully completed the 'Mission to Mars' remote working software development challenge, delivered by Software Cornwall. He earned a badge by demonstrating his skills in coding and developing solutions using C++ with the application of knowledge of Arduino programming and Agile methodology in a team challenge to code and test solutions, before deploying onto an autonomous robotic rover unit. He used version control software and utilised online collaboration tools like Github, Discord and Tinkercard to develop work in a team environment, simulating a real world remote working experience. Well done to Hardiv.
- Nilay Balaji, Year 10, achieved a Distinction in his Grade 5 ABRSM Piano Theory.



Please do send me any stories of student endeavour and success so that I can add them to my newsletter. It was always refreshing during the lockdown last year to find out about these successes and stop my newsletter being dominated with updates of school closure. Many of you will think of innovative ways to support each other and your community so do make us aware. The email address is publicityteam@saintolaves.net. Do not forget to include all the details along with a high-resolution photo you are willing to share and have published on the school website.

Finally, a message for Year 11 students and parents, the Year 11 Options Evening will take place virtually on Thursday 28 January at 6:00 pm. Mr Birtchnell will send further details through about the event in due course.

Please see the Appendix below for this week's Careers news.

Wishing you and your families a restful weekend.

Yours sincerely



Andrew Rees
Headteacher

If you would like to donate into the Voluntary Fund to support the development of our school and enhance learning, and you are not already doing so, please follow this [link](#) to the Virgin Money Giving webpage.

Appendix

Careers News



A range of free virtual fairs to help students, parents, and teachers to explore information to inform the progression choices students will make are now bookable running from 27 January through into the summer. General information or specific university fairs are all on offer. Seminars are included from providers of education, training, and apprenticeships. The season begins with the UK University & Apprenticeship Search Virtual Fair on 27 January and the Meet the Russell Group event on 10 February.



More details from the link <https://www.ukuniversitysearch.com/fair-signup>



Information for parents about the changing world of apprenticeships will be available in two evening events being held online on 26 January and 3 February. These are run by the ASK apprenticeships organisation and the Education Development Trust. Traineeships and apprenticeships will be explained in general along with updates on the current situation for places. Guidance for parents on how to support their child when applying for the roles will also be given. To book use the link <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/apprenticeship-support-and-knowledge-ask-parent-event-tickets-131441112907>

News about our individual careers guidance interviews for Year 12 students and Morrisby profiling for Year 10s will be made available once we are back in school. In the meantime, any Sixth Form students who completed the Morrisby profile in Year 10 or at their previous school are reminded that they can revisit <https://www.morrisby.com/> where they can update their profile and explore the platform using their login for life.

Students can check on Moodle for the latest postings from employers and education providers as well as exploring Unifrog for careers information and on-line courses.

