24th March 2021

Principal’s Update- Wednesday 24th March 2021

Dear students, parents and guardians,

**Covid update**

ST HELENS’ coronavirus case rate has continued to decrease in the latest figures for local authority areas in England.

St Helens has a rate of 63.1 per 100,000 from 114 cases in the seven-day period.

This has gone down from 83.1 per 100,000 from 150 COVID-19 positive cases the previous week.

At the moment, we just have two positive case amongst the college population

**This week**

A reminder, **Upper 6th students** you are now back in college full time, till the end of term.

**Lower 6th students**, you return to college tomorrow and are scheduled to be in till the end of next Tuesday (30th March) – we will make a decision re the last two days of term. this Friday and let you know in Friday’s Principal’s update.

The plan is still that we will have all students back in college at the start of next term – Monday 19th April

**Lower 6th – Please if you try and do a Lateral Flow Test that the night before you come back into college**– you only need to let us know if you have a positive result – as these tests are now done at home, if you test positive you can then access a PCR test at a community test centre and this will confirm your positive or if negative PCR result, you would be able to come back into college.

It is **not mandatory** for students to take a test before returning to college – we are just asking for everyone’s assistance in helping us keep Covid rates down in our area and help us keep Carmel open.

The Home test kits – will be available to pick up in the refectory/main dining room until the end of term
Please see government updates below re home testing for students over Easter and home testing for families/home bubbles

**Summer Exam Grades**

Frustratingly – despite it being now a month since the government’s announcement re the summer exams and grades, we are still awaiting any information from the exam boards re the ‘assessment basket’ they are recommending for each subject.

We are still, hoping, to get a detailed explanation of the college’s approach to this summer grades to you all, by the start of next week and we will also be using the Upper 6th Parents Consultation evening on the 21st April to explain this process at subject level

Like the Lower 6th Parents Consultation evening today, we will be using the School Cloud system for the 21st April – we are planning to send Upper 6th parents and guardians the instructions on how to book and log on to School Cloud next week and we will open the booking system before the Easter holidays.

Can I once again, thank you all, especially the students, for your patience in allowing us to focus for now on teaching and learning and then make the appropriate plans once we have the full picture about this year’s Teacher Assessed Grades. You will appreciate that, for now, most of the key decisions and information remain well out of our control in college.

**Please look out for the next Principal’s update on Friday**

*We have been asked to share with you the following guidance from the Department of Education*

**Testing at home throughout the Easter holidays for schools and colleges**

Following the success of the asymptomatic testing programme on the return to school and college, it is vital to keep testing at home throughout the Easter holidays
and into the summer term. Please pass on this message to all of your staff, students and parents:

- test twice a week at home from now on (all those who are able to)
- report results online as positive, negative or void. This information is critical in helping us to understand the prevalence of the virus across the country
- continue to test twice weekly over the Easter holidays
- test before returning to school or college for the summer term, either the night before, or morning of, the first day back, to find and isolate any positive cases

Families and households can also access home testing kits

College Home testing Kits will be available for collection from the refectory everyday till the end of term

**Home testing for families and Home Bubbles**

*For St Helens residents*

Home testing kits can be collected from the following walk-in sites;

- St Marys Indoor Market, St Helens Town Centre, WA10 1AR - Monday to Friday, 8.30am–6pm and Saturday and Sunday, 10am–3pm.
- Fairclough Street Car Park, Earlestown, Newton-le-Willows WA12 9QR - open Monday to Friday, 1.30pm to 7pm.
- Haydock Park Racecourse, Newton-le-Willows WA12 0HQ – open Monday to Friday, 1.30pm to 7pm.

There is no need to make an appointment to collect a home test kit. Do not visit a collection site outside of opening hours, as they could be used to test people with coronavirus symptoms outside of these times. If you are 18 or over you can collect 2 packs of home test kits, each pack contains 7 tests.
All of our local authorities are now providing collection stations, please see their websites for details of these collection points – unfortunately, for now, schools or colleges are not able to provide this service for families.

Kind regards

Mike Hill
Principal