



30th March 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

I write to you as we progress into the second week of the St Michael's Remote Learning programme and just ahead of our Easter break. We live in uncertain and troubled times but times that have revealed the very best of human spirit. At a time when so many of you will have been managing personal challenges and changing circumstances, I have been extremely grateful for the many positive messages of support that have been sent. I apologise if I have not been able to reply to all correspondence individually, but I can assure you they have been invaluable as both critical advice and appreciated thanks.

The St Michael's motto; perseverance, wisdom and gratitude has been burning brightly in the homes of all our pupils, staff and parents. I have never felt more proud of a community that I have been a member of, never mind had the privilege to lead.

I want to reassure you that over the coming months, we at St Michael's commit to continue to work hard to overcome the challenges that lie ahead. Specifically, we aim to:

1. Provide, through creative teaching and effective technology, the very best experience for our pupils – academic but also pastoral, co-curricular and social.
2. Use every endeavour to provide support and job security to all our staff who have worked tirelessly and shown outstanding loyalty and dedication in an ever-evolving situation
3. Recognise the challenges our parents and friends also face and commit to a pragmatic and compassionate response to those circumstances too.

Our response

I have been very encouraged with the start we have made to Remote Learning to enable us to continue to provide education for our pupils. We committed to upskilling our staff before rolling out virtual lessons as it was important that we find the best systems and support that work for the whole community. The initial two-week phase of remote learning plans has enabled training and experimentation to take place in the background whilst the pupils also get used to working at home. I am confident that their independent learning skills and resilience will have benefitted from this experience. It is very clear that the School did not close on Friday 20th March, but rather re-formed itself to respond to the situation we find ourselves in. We have learnt valuable lessons from this experience, and I am quite certain we will return from the Easter break with an even stronger offering.

To meet the needs of the pupils who are at school (children of key workers), we are operating with a staff rota to ensure the pupils and staff on site are safe. We have been asked to provide the DFE with daily information about our on-site provision.

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Our catering contractor Accent Catering have continued to work in school to provide lunch for our pupils and we send our thanks to those key workers, many of whom have families of their own. Ian Smith and our Estates team are continuing to carry out all the legal checks and essential maintenance to keep the swimming pool and buildings on site safe and operative for when we return.

Our cleaning contractor continues to work on site to ensure areas are kept clean and hygienic for use at this time.

All outside use of the school's facilities has been suspended.

School Fees

It is only right that I address the question of fees at this point.

As you have hopefully already witnessed, we are determined to continue to provide your children with the very best education St Michael's can offer at this time. Our staff remain critical to this. We are looking at ways of making cost savings by minimising expenditure and holding back on any non-essential capital investment. However, the largest cost to our school is our staff costs and we are more reliant on our staff than ever before. I also want to be ready and able to re-open the school as soon as we are able to do so.

Trinity Term Fees

We do not yet know how long school will be required to stay closed. We are keeping this situation under review and working with our bank and insurance brokers. We are carrying out cost modelling and cash flow forecasting and will revert to you as soon as possible once that work is complete, which I hope will be by early next week. Our late payment fees of £100 are being waived until the end of this year.

Schedule of Fees

Our annual advance notice of the fees for the next academic year is being delayed. As a result, any parent who gives notice, once fees are published, for reasons of affordability, will have fees in lieu waived relating to the Michaelmas 2020 term.

Essential Maintenance Projects

We have planned and committed to some essential maintenance projects which will continue to take place over the Easter holidays. The government have confirmed that essential repair and maintenance works should continue. We are asking each of those contractors to implement the government advice about reasonable social distancing in the workplace.

- installation of a new fire alarm in the Prep building
- installation of a new hot water cylinder in the Prep building
- Stable Court roof repair and re-pointing of chimneys

I hope you and your families keep safe and well and that during this period of self-isolation you rediscover the importance of time, new ways of connecting with family and friends and for new skills and talents to be discovered.

Yours truly,



Mary Bridges
Acting Head