



# Thomas More Catholic School 11-19

Mr N. Walters, Headteacher

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London Borough of Croydon  
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To Care. To Learn. To Achieve

16<sup>th</sup> July 2020

Dear All,

My first wish, as ever, is that you, your families and your loved ones are well.

As promised, here is the letter I said I would write to you regarding the principles of our return to school in September. I am delighted to say that school will return in September for all pupils and students. However, there will be particular measures put in place of which everyone needs to be aware.

As the Government document on the full reopening of school states: schools must comply with health and safety law, which requires them to assess risks and put in place proportionate control measures. Schools should thoroughly review their health and safety risk assessments and draw up plans for the autumn term that address the risks identified using the system of controls set out below. These are an adapted form of the system of protective measures that will be familiar from the summer term. Essential measures include:

- a requirement that people who are ill stay at home
- robust hand and respiratory hygiene
- enhanced cleaning arrangements
- active engagement with NHS Test and Trace
- formal consideration of how to reduce contacts and maximise distancing between those in school wherever possible and minimise potential for contamination so far as is reasonably practicable.

We are abiding by all these principles as we look forward to welcoming everyone back. The following is some of the main points but a full risk assessment will be published on the school website over the summer and after the government announcement that we have been promised on the 11th August.

## Bubble arrangements

Schools are asked to do everything possible to minimise contacts and mixing and to consider keeping year groups in bubbles to keep them apart while continuing to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum. We are very fortunate in some ways that our relatively small sized year groups mean we can create bubbles out of two year groups at a time. This is very advantageous and combined with our extensive grounds makes this challenge easier than it might be in some other schools.

We will therefore be having three bubbles across the school:

- Year 7 and 8 will be a bubble
- Year 9 and 10 will be a bubble and
- Year 11, 12 and 13 will be a bubble.

This simply means that they can be in the same place at the same time and keep within the numbers that the government has stated. How this looks will be explored in the rest of this letter.

## Return to School

In order to brief each year group on the new practicalities and to welcome them back sensitively when they have all been out of school for so long, we will be staggering the return as follows:

- Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> September: Staff only INSET day
- Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> September: Year 7 from 8am; Year 12 to gather in the Pritchard Hall at 9:30am
- Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> September: Year 8, Year 11 and Year 13 return at the normal time- in school by 8:15am
- Friday 4<sup>th</sup> September: Year 9 and Year 10 return at the normal time – in school by 8:15am.

## Year Group Playgrounds

In order to keep pupils in different bubbles apart, we are allocating different areas of outdoor space to each bubble:

- Year 7 and Year 8 – the lawns at the front of the school
- Year 9 and 10 – the junior playground
- Year 11 – the senior playground
- Sixth Form – the Picnic area

Wet weather arrangements will utilise the Halls around the school.

## Breakfast in the canteen

Pupils will still be able to collect breakfast in the canteen but there will be no stopping in the canteen. Pupils will go in a socially distanced way, collect their food and return to their allocated outdoor space.

## Break time in the canteen

The use of the canteen at break presents a real challenge because we cannot return to the normal situation of the whole school going through the canteen in the twenty minutes of break. Therefore, there will be a weekly rota of Bubbles who can use the canteen at break. This will start with the Year 7s and Year 8s and other year groups will need to bring food with them if they would like to eat at break. Each week the rota will move to the older year groups.

## Lunch in the canteen

There will be a rota of Bubbles using the canteen and the canteen staff are dispensing with the need for plates or cutlery to minimise sharing. The canteen staff have been fully trained in the latest COVID19 preventative measures and are prepared. The rota will be as follows and all food will be taken to the allocated outdoor spaces:

- Year 7 and 8 – 12:30pm
- Years 9 and 10 – 1pm
- Year 11 – 1:20pm
- Sixth Form – between 12:20 and 12:30 if free or from 1:35pm.

## Toilets

Toilet areas also provide a challenge but pupils and students will be instructed to wash their hands thoroughly and use the toilets responsibly and we are employing day time cleaners who will constantly clean the toilets and other areas and surfaces throughout the day. We are also installing 40 wall mounted hand sanitisers around the school.

## Changeovers between lessons

There will be some inevitable movement around the school between lessons although we will be implementing some one way corridors and we will be allowing Year 7 to leave their classes five minutes early to travel through the school on their own.

## The Case for Masks

As we move into a world where masks are mandatory in shops from the 24<sup>th</sup> July, some people will wonder whether masks will be mandatory in schools. We will wait for any further government directive but at the moment the best advice we can offer is that anyone who has concerns or anyone who would like to wear a mask will be able to wear a mask.

## Staggered dismissal from school

The arrival into school in the morning is naturally staggered with pupils turning up over a period of time. On arrival in school, the children will be directed to their allocated area. At the end of the day, to prevent the whole school leaving at the same time we will be dismissing Year 7 and 8 at 2:30pm to ease the congestion as school empties out. The teaching staff of these year groups period 5 will be asked to walk the pupils down into Purley.

Year 9 and 10 will be dismissed at 2:40pm to ease congestion in corridors and on stair cases. Year 11 and the Sixth form will be dismissed at the normal time of 2:45pm.

All pupils and students are encouraged to make their own way home quickly and safely; not to mix with children from other year groups unless they are family members and make sensible decisions around the use of public transport and shops.

## Dropping off at school

We are aware that some parents will be likely to drop their children off by car in the new term. To avoid real congestion at the school gates, we must ask you to drop pupils off down Russell Hill Road at the junction with Russell Road or on the other side of the school on Highfield Road.

## Uniform requirements and PE Kit

Full and correct uniform is again essential from September. The normal sanctions and processes will be in place for pupils who turn up not in the correct uniform.

## Rules of Covid19

It is worth pointing out to pupils and students right from the start that there are going to be some particular rules that become necessary as a consequence of the new normal and it is critical that they work with us. We will not be able to tolerate anyone flouting these rules which will mostly concern physical contact and physical proximity to each other and to staff. More information about what this means in reality will be shared with the pupils in September.

## Use of the Library

The library is another space in the school that will only be able to open to Bubbles on rotation. It will be open to the Year 7s and 8s for the first week and a half and then it will change to the Year 9 and 10s for a week and so on up through the school. The one difference with the library is that it will be shut on a Monday each week to allow the necessary 72 hours to pass since the previous Friday. This is for health and safety reasons before another Bubble comes in.

### Visitors to the school

Just as now, visitors will not be admitted to the site without prior notice and the organising of an appointment. Hand sanitiser will be available at reception and social distancing will be employed throughout any meeting.

### September Information Evenings

Traditionally, we hold an information evening for each year group in September to inform parents of developments in school life, share our priorities for the coming year, share the calendar for each year group and introduce key staff. It is now highly likely that these evenings will be recorded and put on the school website as it is hard to imagine that gathering people in a school hall will be allowed or welcomed.

### Constant Review

Everything in our risk assessment and in our daily routines will be regularly reviewed on at least a monthly basis and we will make amendments and changes as the needs arise.

May I take this opportunity to wish a you a very peaceful, restful, sunny and happy summer holiday. The last few months have been extraordinary and quite unprecedented. I, together with all my staff, will very much look forward to seeing the full reopening of Thomas More in September.

God Bless and kindest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. Walters', with a small flourish at the end.

Mr N. Walters  
Headteacher