



St. Thomas More High School

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12th November 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

As this week draws to a close, we have carried out our third full review of our school risk assessment and systems of control which now reflect the period of greater restrictions and national effort to control the spread of this coronavirus.

With the rollout of Microsoft Teams and the full O365 suite, we have been able to reduce the number of Sixth Form students in school, as they are able to be guided by staff for some of their learning remotely. This has eased pressure on our enhanced cleaning schedule and redirected resources to other areas in the school during the school day. Thank you and well done to our Sixth Form students for developing such good study habits after such a long break in the summer from school based learning.

Reporting a COVID related absence

We have updated our absence line and school procedure for reporting a COVID related absence. Please now go to the school website and fill in the COVID absence report form, which can also be found on the link [here](#). For all other absences, the school procedure is still to call in to the main switchboard and state your child's name, form and the reason why your child is absent after the tone. We are delighted that this already seems to be working well.

Please remember that if your son/daughter is unwell, please keep them at home – do not let them come to school until they have recovered. If they have symptoms of COVID 19, they should have a test and, if positive, this MUST be reported to the School as soon as possible using the [form](#) including at the weekend. If members of a student's immediate family test positive, they must remain at home and self-isolate in line with Government guidelines. If your son/daughter is self-isolating, please contact school by using the [form](#) further information is available at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Sixth Form Open Afternoon for Year 11 – 26th November 1.30pm – 4.30pm

Although we have had to cancel our usual open evening for external students and parents, staff have been working hard to ensure that our students do receive preparation, guidance and support for their post 16 decisions. Therefore, on **Thursday 26th November, school will finish at 1.20pm for Year 7 – 10 students**. To date, the school contract buses have informed us that they will be collecting the pupils at their usual departure time. They have informed us that they will, however, inform the students who travel on these buses if there is a change to this arrangement.

If you would prefer your son to stay supervised in school until his bus departs, please could you let us know by calling the school on 01702 344933 or by emailing: office@st-thomasmore.southend.sch.uk giving your son's full name and form. If we do not hear from you, we will allow your son to leave at 1:20pm along with the rest of the school.

If your son has been issued with a school detention, he will be supervised by members of the Pupil Support Team and it is expected that he attend.

Face coverings

As you are now aware, this measure has now become **mandatory** following the announcement on Saturday 31st October of [new national restrictions](#). Thank you for your support with reminding your son/daughter and helping us to establish this habit with our students. Almost all have shown civil responsibility and understanding of this measure to keep us all safe.

As a reminder, face coverings should be worn by adults and pupils Year 7 and above when moving around the premises, outside of classrooms, such as in corridors and when queuing for food in the canteen where social distancing cannot easily be maintained.

Staggered end to the school day

In my fortnightly meetings with Local Authority officers and Southend's Director Public Health and his department, Secondary Headteachers were asked to attempt an even greater spreading out of school end times. We will trial a staggered end to the school day dismissing year group bubbles from 3.12pm until 3.20pm until further notice. This, we hope will keep our students more separate on their journeys home and reduce congestion in the local area.

Staff INSET day – Friday 27th November

A reminder also that the school is **CLOSED** for a staff inset day on Friday 27th November 2020. No students are required to attend school on this day.

As always, we keep you and your families in our prayers at this time and thank you for your continued understanding and support,

Yours sincerely



Mrs G Ackred
Headteacher