

## St. Thomas More High School

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17<sup>th</sup> December 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

As we have finally reached the end of term, I wanted to take this opportunity to write to you and thank you for all your support and understanding this year. I am incredibly grateful to you for the messages of thanks that we have received. I cannot easily put into words how challenging the term has been. The effects of COVID 19 are all too plain to see but I also wanted to reflect on all the other positive things that have happened over the past few months.

You can be rightly proud of your son or daughter for their commitment to school life and the way they have engaged with their teachers, even in the most difficult of circumstances. What has struck me after each review of student progress is how resilient our students have been – maintaining really high standards in their attitude towards their learning in extraordinary times. For that, they are to be commended.

Charity work and our compassion for others less fortunate than ourselves has continued in the recent fundraising for CAFOD through our Christmas Jumper non-uniform day which currently stands at £1160 and fantastic donations for food banks. Thank you – for without your support this would not be possible.

Throughout this term, I have been amazed by our staff here at St Thomas More High School. They have gone far beyond what has been expected and provided great support, care and teaching for all our students. They have all been remarkable and I could not ask for a more committed and dedicated team. Please keep them all in your prayers. We will all end the term tired and looking forward to some quality time with our families and catching up on much needed sleep and rest. I hope that all of you find time to catch up with loved ones and enjoy the peace and rest of the Christmas holiday.

I have listed details about arrangements for contacts during the Christmas holidays regarding COVID 19 cases below. Our school term is due to start on Tuesday, 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021. We start back on Week 1 and Year 11 and Year 13 are on study leave for the duration of their mock exams.

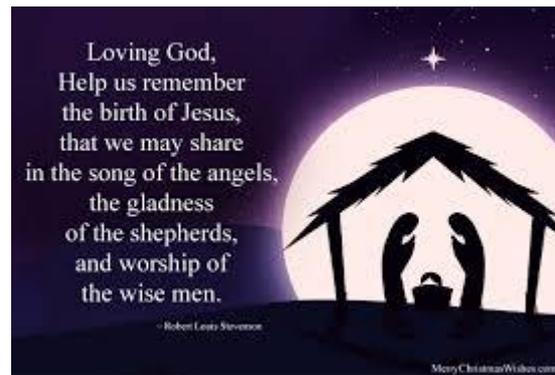
We will be reviewing the Spring Calendar of events on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January as the imminent announcement from the DfE regarding the start of the new term, will no doubt come too late for planning and communication to you all this side of the Christmas break. Please continue to be vigilant and adhere to the government guidance over the holiday period to protect our loved ones and other members of our communities who are vulnerable.

Finally, may I take this opportunity to wish you and your families a Happy, Holy and Peaceful Christmas. The New Year will bring its challenges, but it will also bring many opportunities and we look forward to continuing our work with you all in 2021.

God bless, keep safe and keep well.

Mrs Ackred  
**Headteacher**

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## COVID 19 - Arrangements for Christmas Holidays

Schools have played a vital role in reducing the spread of COVID19 over the last 9 months. One way in which they have done this is by undertaking contact tracing on behalf of the Essex Contact Tracing team. They identify any individuals who have been in close contact at school with someone who has tested positive for COVID19, during the time that is considered the contagious period. This is from 2 days before the person's symptoms are displayed. Those individuals are then required to self-isolate for 10 days because they are at risk of having contracted COVID19 and being contagious themselves.

This contact tracing will not be taking place in the usual way during the Christmas break when schools are closed and there is less chance of school-based contacts existing.

Please follow the guidance below if your child begins to show symptoms of COVID19 during the Christmas break.

### **If your child develops symptoms of COVID19 within 48 hours of being in school**

You must seek a test for your child and the household must isolate at home until the test result is returned. You should let your school know that this has occurred. The quickest way to obtain a test is to book a test at your local testing centre via <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>. Please do not use postal tests unless absolutely necessary as these take longer.

If the test result is positive for COVID19, you must inform your school, who will identify if there are any other individuals within the school community who are impacted by this.

If the test result is negative, you do not need to take any further action.

You should contact the school on over the next two days via the designated portal [St Thomas More High School Student COVID Absence Report \(office.com\)](https://www.stthomasmorehighschool.co.uk/absence-report) on the website which will be monitored between 8am and 1.30pm each day.

Please do **NOT** use the office email or the school phone line, as this will not be monitored or activated over the next two weeks.

### **If your child develops symptoms of COVID19 more than 48 hours after their last day in school**

You must seek a test for your child and the household must isolate at home until the test result is returned.

If the test result is positive for COVID-19, having developed symptoms more than 48 hours since being in school, you must contact NHS Test and Trace and follow the advice given by them: [www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/)

**If your child has no symptoms of COVID19 but tests positive within 48 hours of being in school**

It is important to follow the guidance around accessing a test only when the individual is showing signs of COVID19. However, if your child is asymptomatic and returns a positive test result within 48 hours of last being in school, please let the school know straight away.

You should contact the school on over the next two days via the designated portal [St Thomas More High School Student COVID Absence Report \(office.com\)](#) on the website which will be monitored between 8am and 1.30pm each day.

Please do **NOT** use the office email or the school phone line, as this will not be monitored or activated over the next two weeks.

If you are contacted by the school because your child is identified as a close contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID19, they must self-isolate for 10 days. We would suggest that you take your child for a test around 3-4 days before return to school so we can ensure that no-one is infectious and can start an outbreak.