



27th March 2020

Dear parents and carers,

We have made it to the end of the first week of school closure and I felt that it was important to write to you to update you with what is being thought, said, and done in our community.

Firstly, a BIG THANK YOU to so many of you who have been able to support the school closure. In doing so, we have protected everyone from significant harm and worry – both student and staff families. I would insist that this remains a priority wherever possible. The staff have been deployed on a rolling rota to minimise their contact, as well as certain staff being asked to stay at home due to specific vulnerabilities. I am proud that this has been a real team effort. Thank you again.

Safeguarding, Well-being and Free School Meals

In terms of health and well-being, we have been pushing a lot of information daily via our Instagram page: [stalbanshigh_ipswich](https://www.instagram.com/stalbanshigh_ipswich). I would encourage as many of you as possible to follow us as the latest updates, messages of support, and daily worship can be found there.

We take our safeguarding very seriously at St Alban's - so there has been, and will be, permanent safeguarding cover in place during the closure – for all students. We have been in contact with our vulnerable families across the school and Sixth Form to ensure this link is maintained. Our finance team has organised Free School Meals for all those eligible via a voucher scheme. Any issues, please give us a call at school – the desk is open from 9am until 3pm each day.

All form tutors have been asked to make contact with their form regularly from this week to encourage them to think about doing other things than just the curriculum – my advice was to attempt new chores!!

Curriculum and Learning

I have been pleased to see that so many students have engaged so positively with our e-learning platform. Thank you to so many of you for your messages of support. Guides on **eSchools** have been updated on our website, on the **grey Noticeboard** listed as **eSchools Help**. If you have specific concerns, please could students contact their subject teachers as they have been instructed to.

Senior Leaders and Heads of Faculty will be reviewing the range and scope of activities set. If you as parents and carers want to find other things for our students to study or do during this period, I would simply ask that you email the subject teacher to make sure they know what your intention is; this is so that they can support you and monitor the work completed. As I have commented to parents, open communication during this period is vital.



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On the flipside, for some students, and indeed parents, this has been somewhat overwhelming. We are working hard, as I say, to put students at ease in this new era. Our advice is to work hard as normal, but take regular breaks – hopefully some daily exercise (beyond the Playstation!) – and relax where you can. Again, our Instagram posts will help you.

Exams

We are expecting an update next week from Ofqual. Could I ask that students and parents wait until we receive formal notification before asking us questions we can only ‘best guess’ at the moment. What we do know is that the exam season has been cancelled, and that it is likely that teacher assessments and other data will be used. As soon as we know, we will be in contact with you.

Moving Forward

The school leadership are in uncharted waters... there is no rulebook for what we are doing. Setting up all the learning and feedback is a task by itself!

I must pay tribute to the volume of work going into the forward planning and thinking around how we continue to support all students, but also there are so many other things from the Summer term that need to be considered. Currently, we are reshaping our thoughts on transition for those new parents coming into a full Year 7, as well as a modified Presentation Evening, and working out ways we can show our fullest respect to Year 11, as they have had their special year cruelly cut short!

It is particularly important that in these times of challenge we turn in prayer to God, drawing strength from His infinite mercy and wisdom. Every day, I ask for the courage to be the best version of myself – for others to benefit.

Matt Baker & the Leadership Team