



**St Saviour's
& St Olave's
School**

An 11-18 Church of England Girls' School

HEADTEACHER: CATHERINE MAY BSC (HONS) MBA

New Kent Road, London SE1 4AN Tel: 020 7407 1843

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18th June 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

Silver Linings 10

I do hope this latest edition of Silver Linings finds you and your family well. It's been 14 calendar weeks - 11 school weeks - since we last opened the school building to all our students, and they have been greatly missed. Although numbers are very small due to the current restrictions, it has been an absolute joy to see some of our students back at school this week and it has given us all hope that things will return to a new normal. I hope you are also feeling hopeful for the future.

As I mentioned in last week's Silver Linings, staff have attended briefings on the measures we have taken to make our school as safe as possible; this was also an opportunity for them to give useful feedback on what else we might do or just to share their feelings about being back in our school building. The final briefing took part on Friday afternoon – that was a total of six briefings given to small staff groups, done so to ensure the appropriate social distancing was in place. Those staff who are 'shielding' at home received notes from the briefing and will have an induction relevant to their situation when they are able to return to working in school. Naturally, some staff members felt anxiety, understandable given that there is still so much uncertainty on a local, national and global scale, but I am pleased to report that the majority of staff members reported feeling less anxious following these briefings. We do not underestimate the impact that this lockdown will have had on our staff and we will continue to work with them to make sure we have put in place the right support to create the feeling of safety that has been shaken in recent months.

These staff briefings paved the way for the return of Year 10 students this week, who have come in on an appointment basis to meet with teachers from their core subjects (including Religious Studies), a form tutor and to collect any resources provided by teachers of non-core subjects. The government has stipulated that Year 10 and Year 12 are a priority because they are exam years, but we have not lost sight of the whole child; we knew that having them return for a meeting was as much about checking on their welfare and wellbeing as it was about the learning. We have always understood that one is dependent on the other and never is that truer than at this current period of time. It was, to be frank, an emotional experience to see them back in the building, dressed immaculately in their uniform and so keen to speak to their teachers. We have the highest expectations of our students but even we were surprised, given the current climate and the myriad of issues that families are struggling with, that on the first day, 23 out of the 24 students arrived on time (or early) for their appointment; it transpired that the one student who did not arrive could not make her appointment and managed to reschedule! The same pattern of high attendance and resilience has been evident throughout the week. It says so much about our students that the lockdown has not dimmed their ambition, their work ethos and their aspiration; many walked to school to avoid public transport. They are a credit to their families and to the school. These meetings will give us a clearer picture of where the learning needs are and how best to meet them in the weeks we have left before the summer break – this will mean a blend of some students in school and some continuing to work at home and this may vary for different subjects.





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How our subsequent weeks unfold will also factor in Year 12, who will be invited in from Monday 22nd June in small groups and on different days according to a timetable we have created with their subject teachers. This is a careful balancing act for us as we need to adhere to the government's ruling that only a quarter of Year 10 and Year 12 (as one total) can be present in school at any one time. This equates to a maximum of 45 students in the building in addition to our community class. As part of our risk assessment, we have stated that classrooms will not be in use – instead we are using other larger areas of the school which allow for maximum distancing and ventilation. This also presents a logistical challenge - one that we have met - and we are confident that the plans in place will make all who attend feel safe and engaged in learning. More details will be sent out to these families shortly.

The group that have been attending throughout the lockdown, the children of key workers and the vulnerable students, will now be known as the 'community class' – this helps us to distinguish them from the other groups of students that might be in the building now that we are open to more. The community class will continue to attend school from 9.45am until 2.15pm and they are to be kept separate from other staff and students at all times. This group continues to shift slightly as some students have come in for a 'reset' day if they have been struggling with the learning or if a parent's work situation has changed and they have asked for their daughter to be in school. We are happy to help in any way we can and will continue to staff phone lines so that there is someone to speak to if you have concerns about any number of issues from learning needs to ICT, from school meals to general wellbeing. In the vast majority of cases there has been some sort of solution or improvement as a result of a family getting in touch. It reminds us all that even though we are apart, there is still such strength in our community's bond and so many with the skill and will to offer assistance where it is needed.

It's hard to believe that there are only four weeks left until the end of term – one effect of the lockdown has been its ability to warp our sense of time. We are working to ensure that the end of the academic year and all the events that would normally mark that can still continue in some form: this includes Activities Week, Creative Arts Week and Sports Day. Restrictions obviously mean that these won't allow us to come together as a community but there are still opportunities that exist for students to engage virtually and creatively. Looking ahead to September, we are clarifying our strategy for what we are calling a 'recovery' year which will involve a plan for helping students to catch up on the learning that has been missed or not as developed as we would expect. A key part of the strategy will also look at how we address racial inequality, in light of the Black Lives Matter movement, that has shifted our global consciousness in the most powerful way. Heads of Department are engaging in a curriculum review, but our scope will be wider than that and to do this well we will need to hear from members of our community. If some form of lockdown persists in the autumn term, it is likely that our ability to host speakers will be reduced but we will still find ways to engage with those who are working with schools to improve social justice. It is a challenge but more so an opportunity and one that we embrace.

You will likely have heard in the news that the free school meals provision is to be continued over the summer; following a campaign by footballer Marcus Rashford the government have promised parents will now be able to claim vouchers for the duration of the summer holidays. This is fantastic news and another exciting example of how a voice can affect real change. We know that for some of our families, circumstances will





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have recently changed - if this is the case and you think you may now qualify for free school meal provision, please email office@ssso.southwark.sch.uk for information on what to do next. We have yet to hear confirmation of how the summer voucher scheme will work but it is likely that the system will look slightly different and parents who qualify will receive a single 6-week voucher. We will communicate more about this as soon as we receive guidance.

At the end of this letter are some of the usual links for sites you may find helpful, and we have also included the link to the summer project which you may like to sign up for. As I did last week, I'm going to give the last word in this newsletter to one of our most senior students, Esther Igalí. She writes:

Last week our Head Girl, Dominique, wrote about her reaction to the cancellation of exams. Like her, I was initially excited at the prospect of not having to sit exams which can often be a source of anxiety for many students. However, the trepidation of not knowing what was to come soon set in. The cycle of public examinations and how we prepare for them have always been a constant and this turn of events meant relinquishing the control such certainty brings. At the beginning of lockdown, I comforted myself with the knowledge that I was not alone in this novel experience. The power of modern technology and social media meant that I was able to access information about these changes and keep in touch with those who were also going through the same thing, allowing us to learn from and support each other. The rise of the Black Lives Matter movement in this period has also pushed me to reconsider what education means and the part it plays in creating a better world. A lot of emphasis has been placed on educating ourselves on our collective histories and the role of the education system in ensuring that we go out into the world well equipped with the knowledge to change it. This has pushed me to re-evaluate the knowledge I have gained in my years at school and to value it not just as necessary to secure good qualifications but as a tool to make the world a better place. Although this year has played out very differently to how I and I am sure many others imagined it, life as a student in lockdown has reminded me of the reason we learn and of the true value of knowledge; giving me an even greater appreciation of my time at St Saviour's.

As a school we are here to teach, but we will also continue to learn from our students and our community. My thanks to Dominique and to Esther for their contributions to Silver Linings, but more importantly for the legacy they will leave at St. Saviour's.

With very best wishes, stay safe.

Catherine May
Headteacher



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Prayers / Thoughts for the Day

'If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other'. Saint Teresa of Calcutta.

'Come to me, all you who labor and are heavily burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.' Matthew 11:28-30

'Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable, if anything is excellent or praiseworthy think about such things' Philippians 4:8

'May the strength of the wind and the light of the sun,
The softness of the rain and the mystery of the moon
Reach you and fill you.
May beauty delight you and happiness uplift you,
May wonder fulfil you and love surround you.
May your step be steady and your arm be strong.
May your heart be peaceful and your word be true.
May you seek to learn, may you learn to live
May you live to love, and you may you love – always.'
Celtic blessing

'Clothe yourself with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.' (Colossians 3:126)

'When someone spews something really hurtful don't pick it up and hold it and rub it into your heart and snuggle with it and carry it around for a long time. Don't even put energy into kicking it to the curb. You gotta see it and step OVER it or go AROUND it and keep on going.' Brené Brown

Link to the National Academy faith-based assembly about resilience:

<https://classroom.thenational.academy/activity-clubs/faith-at-home/episodes/resilience-secondary/>

Link to The Oak Academy National Assembly on 'Kindness':

<https://classroom.thenational.academy/assemblies/kindness>

Link to Southwark Young Advisors:

<https://youngadvisors.org.uk/southwark/>





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Holiday food and activity programme:

This week Southwark announced a new partnership with Lambeth and the Mayor's Fund to provide an extended programme of holiday food and activity this summer. Beginning July 22nd, the 'Lambeth and Southwark's Summer of Food and Fun' programme will ensure that children and young people (aged 4-19 years), their families and/or carers are able to access a regular source of free nutritious meals over the summer, whether at a local club or at home, and join an array of community activities including sports, theatre, arts and crafts and cooking. For more information please see the link below:

<https://www.mayorsfundforlondon.org.uk/lambeth-southwark-summer-food-fun/>

Latest Guidance from DfE on the re-opening of schools can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/reopening-schools-and-other-educational-settings-from-1-june>

NSPCC support and guidance on talking to children about Coronavirus link:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/coronavirus-advice-support-children-families-parents/>

