



Dear Parents/Carers

## **Covid-19 Update 24<sup>th</sup> March 2020**

I am writing to update you on the current situation concerning the coronavirus and other important matters.

Firstly, I hope that you and all of your families are well at this difficult time. Thank you for your support of our school, firstly, by keeping your children at home and ensuring that they complete their work to the best of their ability. Thank you also for your kindness and generosity in donating food for last Friday's Mufti day. We were able to send food hampers to 18 of our families. Today, Niall, our School Chaplain, took food to the Turning Tides Homeless Shelter; the remaining food will be sent to the Worthing Food Bank.

I am sure that you saw the Prime Minister's message yesterday. He could not have been clearer that every one of us needs to do our bit by remaining at home as much as possible; this will save lives but only if we all follow it. Please support this and help keep everybody safe.

School has remained open for a small number of our most vulnerable students and the children of families who work in front line NHS services, or are employed in care services working with vulnerable adults or children. These students could not have been more of a privilege to teach and spend time with over the last two days. I would like to thank our wonderful staff who have worked with them in school while also setting and marking the work for their own classes. We are so blessed to have such a hardworking, caring and talented staff.

Having reviewed the first two days of remote learning, it is clear that the vast majority of students are completing their work to a high standard. For the small majority who haven't, teachers will email them and their parents/carers today. I will send a separate letter to Year 11s but in essence it is critical that they too continue to work hard now that the GCSEs will be awarded based on teacher assessment.

We are trying to think of creative ways to ensure that all students feel connected and part of the school community. One way we will do this is by sending out a daily video message and challenge. Please encourage your son/daughter to complete this challenge and send it in where it will be judged by the teacher who set it. Mrs House led today's challenge and it was a lot of fun.



In today's message I was able to confirm that we will be changing our school name to St Oscar Romero Catholic School from 1st September 2020. The reason we chose today to announce this is that today is the 40th Anniversary of St Oscar Romero's death. Oscar Romero was assassinated while saying Mass in El Salvador and was a tireless champion of human rights, always speaking out on behalf of the poor and vulnerable in society. As a school we too have that same ethos and care for those in need, something that has been demonstrated in recent days. I will be working with a focus group of students as we finalise a new school logo and agree on a new school tie that promotes greater house identity.

Finally, please contact us if you have any concerns or are struggling in any way. This is a challenging time for everyone and we need to all support each other in any way we can. Some of our students are going to find the increased 'locked down' style of living particularly difficult. We are sending out Mental Wellbeing Tips via Google Classroom but equally it is important for all students to disconnect from their computer for a sustained period each day. In particular, I would strongly recommend having a period before bed when all social media and screen time is turned off. This is a great opportunity to talk as a family and review the day.

As always, thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Byrne', with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Mr Byrne