



# St Joseph's Catholic Middle School

## End of Term Letter – Friday 16th July 2021

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Dear Parents and Students,

It is hard to believe that the 2020-2021 school year is almost at its end. This year has been extraordinarily difficult for everyone but the end is in sight and I am looking forward to a less complicated 2021-2022 school year. This is an extremely busy time of year for everyone and we have many exhausted staff and pupils who are ready for a holiday.

Before doing so, I would firstly like to thank you for your continued support and flexibility through this very difficult period. This year has been a challenge like no other for parents and I cannot thank you enough for your patience and understanding throughout the year. All the sacrifices that our school communities have made have ensured the safety of everyone during this pandemic within our schools. However, by working together and an ability to be flexible, we have almost made it to the finish line.

Personally, I am so thankful for the hard work, determination and resilience that the students and staff have shown this year despite all the unprecedented challenges of which there have been many.

The children have been a true credit to all parents, carers and the community of Hexham and surrounding areas. I am so proud of the St Joseph's and St Mary's family and how we continue to work together to get through the ups and downs of this global pandemic.

Finally, I want to thank all staff for their hard work and perseverance in helping us deliver the best possible educational experience to our pupils under these most taxing of circumstances. To the school leadership teams and all their efforts to ensure pupils have an outstanding school environment. It is our staff who make this school the terrific school it is and a wonderful place of work and learning.

Next week, our school remains open for our Summer School and Summer Sports Camp. I thank everyone for helping in this organisation especially Mrs Seddon and Mr Secker.

Parents have already been asking how next year will look within our schools. I can shed some light following Gavin Williamson, the Education Ministers recent update about school life going forward. As a result of the announcement, we will continue the staggered start and end of the school day from September at St Josephs, due to the added calmness it brings to our school. KS2 will start at 8.40 am and KS3 at 8.50 am. Break and lunch times will remain as they were before the changes brought in over the last academic year. This will help us deliver the curriculum with less disruption.

Although we expect and hope to be back into normal classrooms in September, we shall have a contingency plan in place to restore the zones if necessary. All schools have been encouraged to

develop contingency plans that allow us to respond to the latest data on local and national transmission rates in two months' time.

The 'bubble' arrangement of having Y7s and Y8s in separate corridors will also stop from September. Pupils will move freely around our school building, utilising all specialist subject resource rooms. With bubbles gone, it will be the responsibility of NHS Test and Trace, not schools, to decide who has to isolate.

**After we break up today, we still have a responsibility to inform the DfE of any Covid cases up until Monday 19th July. If your child shows any symptoms of Covid-19 please take them for a covid test.**

**If this test comes back positive, please contact school immediately by email at [parentcontact@hexhamstjosephs.uk](mailto:parentcontact@hexhamstjosephs.uk)**

**This will enable us to take any appropriate action necessary.**

**Thank you in advance for your co-operation.**

### Staffing News

Of course, it is the time in the year when we sadly say goodbye to some staff. This year, two long-standing members staff, Mr Rogstad, DT and Computing and Mrs Sinclair, Food Technology, are leaving St Josephs this Summer.

We will miss them and thank them for all their hard work and dedication to our school over the years.

Mrs Laws, Cover Supervisor and Language teacher also leaves us to take up a post at Sacred Heart High School, Newcastle.

We also have Mr Thompson leaving St Mary's, where he will be missed by staff and children alike. We wish all our leavers every success in the future

We warmly welcome Mr Wright who will join our technology department and Miss Cowie who takes up a marketing apprenticeship administrative role.

Due to the COVID restrictions we were unable to say goodbye in a fitting way to our previous outstanding Headteacher Mrs Fiona Conley, Caretaker Mr Spence, Administrator Mrs Henderson and Art Teacher Mrs Miller. On Tuesday, St Joseph's staff and pupils welcomed them all back as we officially opened the Fiona Conley Prayer Garden. Please see the photos on our Facebook page.

As you are aware, Fr Chris Warren leaves our Parish this Summer for the Vatican. Fr Chris was given a great send off on Monday as he blessed the Fr Chris Prayer Garden at St Mary's, with the choir from St Joseph's in attendance. Please see photos on our Facebook page.

Mr Tomas Neeson will stand down as Chair of Governors at the end of term and I thank him for his years of dedication to both our schools in a difficult and often challenging role.



## Reports

The end of year reports were issued on Tuesday and I must thank parents for the positive feedback.

The classes for September are as follows:

Y5	Y6	Y7	Y8
5M - Miss Mooney	6D - Miss Dodds	7RG – Mr Rosier & Mrs Gelson	8C - Mrs Coulson
5S - Mr Simpson	6H - Mr Hudson	7H - Mrs Hagger	8D - Mrs Dotchin
		7S - Mr Secker	8S - Mr Seddon

In light of the current situation, pupils' books will be recycled for next year. Pupils will need to bring in their own equipment, packs will not be issued this year.

## Summer Music Concert

On Tuesday evening, Mr Rosier and some of our amazingly talented pupils, took part in a live streamed music concert. We were treated to a wide variety of genres, soloists and ensembles. We have been inundated with messages from parents, grandparents and friends of our school, congratulating us on the standard of musicians we have at St Joseph's. We even reached as far as the Pyrenees. Well done to Mr Rosier, Mr Fairgrieve, instrumental tutors and all our musicians. If you were unable to watch the concert, this can be seen on our school Facebook page.

## Y8 Celebrations

Our Y8 pupils have certainly had a busy few days. Last Wednesday, they went to Allout Adventures in Slaley for their end of year trip and Thursday was their Leavers' Mass at St



Mary's church. While we were unable to allow parents in church, the Mass was live streamed for those who wanted to join us.

This week, they have enjoyed a trip to the cinema and yesterday was the Y8 Awards Ceremony along with a Leavers' Meal. Award winners will be published on our website in due course.

Y8 has been very different for our pupils and it has given us immense pleasure to see them rewarded in some way for their resilience over the last year.

To all our Y8s, it is now time to say goodbye and good luck as you move on to pastures new, ranging from St Thomas More Blaydon, Queen Elizabeth High, Prudhoe and Haydon Bridge. We have known many of you since being in Y5 and it is amazing to see how much you have all developed and grown over the years. As you move to your new secondary schools, we hope that you continue to flourish and take pride in your learning so that you realise your future ambitions. All the best to each and every one of you. Remember you will always be part of the family of St Joseph's and are welcome to return at any time in the future.

Finally, we want to say thank you to all of our pupils, those who are both in school and those who are self-isolating at home. We know that this has been a difficult time for you with so much disruption especially in the Spring Term which has been extremely hard, but you too have played an important role in helping stop the spread of the virus in our community. We are really looking forward to seeing you all in September.

#### Return to school in September 2021

A reminder to all parents that only our new Year 5 pupils will start school on Tuesday 7th September. Please arrive at school ready for 8:40am, a letter has been sent to new pupils by email.

Our Y6, 7 and 8 pupils will start school on Wednesday 8th September, however they will have a Google Meet with their form teacher and an English and Maths lesson left online for them on Tuesday 7th to help them prepare for their return to school. Details to follow during the summer.

#### Covid testing

Pupils do not need to continue lateral flow tests in the holidays however we have been advised that they will have two tests when they return in September. An outline of our testing timetable is given below but please be aware this may change.

The first test will be done by appointment time which will be sent to you via ParentMail towards the end of the summer holidays. The second test will be completed when the pupils are in school.

Date	Year Group
Monday 6th September (test by appointment)	Year 8
Tuesday 7th September (test by appointment)	Year 7
Pupils in Ys 6,7 & 8 return to school	
Thursday 9th September (test in school)	Year 8
Friday 10th September (test in school)	Year 7

## Consent for Testing

Year 8 in September 2021. We have consent from this year but please inform us of any changes. For those pupils entering Year 7 and any new starters in September 2021, a ParentMail will be sent during the summer holidays asking for your consent to test your child using the Lateral Flow Tests. Any changes to government guidance may affect our plans but we will keep you informed. Please check ParentMail regularly as this is our best way of communication.

I cannot tell you how much we are looking forward to the full relaxation of the restrictions that have kept us safe over the past 18 months. One last effort should see us through. If we have learned anything in the past 18 months, it is to worry about and think about the things we can control, and not devote too much energy to the things we cannot.

Once again, please check the website and your emails, as further information regarding the return to school will be posted.

### **God our Father,**

**We can look back over the last few years and recall the friendships that have formed and the good relationships that we have developed.**

**We give thanks for all who have enriched our lives in various ways: at home, in school, in church, and in the local community.**

**past, as we place ourselves into your hands. Inspire us in the years ahead to live in such a way that we readily apologise when things go wrong, as well as expressing thanks and encouragement to those who are a part of our lives.**

**We give thanks, Father, for the gifts, talents and skills that you have given to each one of us. We think of people who may have received less than others but have made much of themselves.**

**We remember, too, those who have overcome great difficulties, and all who have inspired us because they have given their best.**

**In giving thanks for what has been in the past, we ask for your blessing on our present and future.**

**We pray for wisdom in setting our priorities and in making our choices that we may live fully and make our part of the world a better place because of the care and compassion that we bring into it.**

**Amen**

On behalf of Fr Chris,  
Governors and staff, may we  
wish you a happy and restful  
Summer.



*Mr P Naughton*  
*Fr Chris*



