



6 May 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

**Re: Thanks and reassurance**

As we await a significant announcement from the Government later in the week, on when schools will reopen, I thought I would write to you regarding two important matters.

Firstly, thank you for everything that you have been doing at home. Many parents and carers are trying to juggle home schooling with their own workloads and looking after elderly relatives, albeit remotely, a challenging time for everyone. Everything you do really does help and reinforces the message that education is important, even in times of national crisis.

Last week, Amanda Spielman, head of England's schools watchdog, Ofsted, spoke to the Education Select Committee and mentioned that:

***"We have to accept that what can be done while schools are substantially closed is a very poor substitute for full normal education."***

She continued by saying:

***"...it would be unrealistic for anyone, including me, to expect the vast majority of children to have made the same progress they would have made if they'd been in school."***

Everyone in education is acutely aware of this fact; nothing compares to children being in school.

In attempting to reassure you, hand on heart, I know that when students return to school, they will work hard and catch up quickly. With high quality teaching, regular assessment and focused intervention and support we will fill the gaps in knowledge and understanding. As older students prepare for future examinations, St Martin's has a proven track record in preparing youngsters extremely well. Year after year, teaching staff regularly go the extra mile and offer extensive extra revision lessons. These take the form of lunchtime and afterschool sessions as well as slots in school holiday time.

Including reception year, children spend twelve years in compulsory education, attending school for around 2,200 days in total. At the end of this week, children will have missed 24 school days, approximately 1.1% of total school time.

We can also draw comfort from two international examples. Due to natural disasters in New Orleans, USA, in 2005 and in Christchurch, New Zealand, in 2011, children

were denied access to school for an extended period. On both occasions, children quickly caught up on the missed learning. There is much evidence from both examples that due to the intervention and adaptability of local schools and teaching excellence, test scores did not decline and in many cases test scores improved.

Thanks again for everything you are doing to support your child's education. One day, in a better future, they will thank you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. N. Goddard', written in a cursive style.

Mr D N Goddard  
***Deputy Headteacher***