

# St Matthew Academy

St Joseph's Vale, Blackheath, London SE3 0XX

Headteacher: Ms Miranda Baldwin

Head of Primary: Ms Joanna Chick



12 February 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

So we come to the end of another extraordinary half term at SMA for pupils, staff, families and everyone in our local community. There is no doubt that the current lockdown is proving challenging for us all but as a result of everyone following the government expectations we can now see the really positive impact this has had on reducing the transmission of the virus. With the excellent progress being made on vaccinating the population there is definitely light at the end of the tunnel.

I am incredibly proud of the pupils and staff at the Academy who have shown remarkable resilience in adapting so seamlessly to remote learning. Our offer has been first class as evidenced by the excellent levels of engagement from our pupils. For those of you that have been reading our fortnightly newsletter and/or follow us on Twitter ([@stmattacad](https://twitter.com/stmattacad)) you can't fail to be impressed by the amazing and varied examples of work that our pupils produce each and every day. Without a doubt my highlight has been the posts showing off our pupils baking skills – there have been some amazing creations that would wow the judges on The Great British Bake Off and they have provided me with the inspiration to get baking over half term!

We know that the challenges of lockdown continue for so many families. Please do remember that we are here to support each and every one of you as much as we possibly can. You can request support on our website [here](#) and we will get right back in touch with you. Over this half term I am really proud of all that staff have done at SMA to support our pupils and families.

We have loaned over 190 laptops to pupils, provided unlimited data solutions to more than 90 families, made thousands of keeping in touch and wellbeing phone calls home and made home visits to in excess of 60 families. We have introduced a number of new reward initiatives this term and I know the introduction of the Awesome Avocado Award in the primary phase has been a real hit with our younger pupils (and their proud families!) Our Critical Worker provision, totalling 7 bubbles of pupils across all phases of the Academy, has offered all families that require it, a safe space for their children to work while family members go out to work.

As we prepare for half term I want to thank all parents and carers that have provided feedback after the year 7 and Year 11 virtual parents evenings and also to those that completed the remote learning survey. Ms Thurston and Ms Chick will be sharing more details from the remote learning survey when we return back to school towards the end of February. In the mean time I would like to take this opportunity to share the more general feedback we gather from you on a regular basis.

As you can see the feedback below, from the post parents' evening questionnaires is overwhelmingly positive however the data does indicate some areas where we can do even better. In particular, we want to ensure that when concerns are raised we deal with them promptly and efficiently and I would ask all parents and carers to contact me via my PA, Ms Jones at [RJO@stmatthewacademy.co.uk](mailto:RJO@stmatthewacademy.co.uk) if they feel this is not the case.

Parent Questionnaire	Strongly Agree/Agree	
	Year 7	Year 11
Number of responses	52	44
My child is happy at this school	96%	86%
My child feels safe at this school	94%	84%
The school makes sure its pupils are well behaved	88%	84%
The school makes me aware of what my child will learn during the year	87%	87%
When I have raised concerns with the school, they have been dealt with properly	71%	77%
The school supports my child's personal development	83%	86%
This school has high expectations for my child	94%	84%
My child does well at this school	90%	86%
The school lets me know how my child is doing	94%	91%
There is a good range of subjects available to my child at this school	90%	89%
	<b>Yes</b>	
My child has been bullied at this school	6%	23%
If yes, the school dealt with the bullying quickly and effectively	58%	50%
Does your child have special educational needs	8%	5%
If yes, my child has SEND and the school gives them the support	52%	61%
I would recommend this school to another parent	94%	88%

Our thoughts are now focused on getting life at SMA back to normal and having our school corridors buzzing with the sound of happy, excited pupils. The Prime Minister has stated that the 8<sup>th</sup> March will be the earliest date at which schools will be able to return however, we have not received any more information about what this might look like; which year groups would be involved and importantly, if it is definitely this date. Experience has taught us that plans can change very quickly but we have at least been promised two weeks' notice so, as soon as we have confirmation we will share our procedures.

Can I finish by thanking all parents and carers for their continued support during this strangest of terms. Juggling work commitments and home schooling along with everyday family commitments is not easy for anyone so thank you for enabling your children to engage fully with remote learning.

I wish you all an enjoyable and restful break and I look forward to writing to you next term with news of the return to school for all our SMA pupils.

Yours faithfully,



**Ms M Baldwin**  
**Headteacher**