

# St Matthew Academy

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

Headteacher: Ms Miranda Baldwin

Head of Primary: Ms Joanna Chick



22 March 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

It has been a delight to welcome SMA pupils back to school. The first two weeks back on site have been a real success as our pupils have quickly got back into their routines and learning. Hearing the sound of children in our corridors, chatter, laughter, and the hubbub of school life has brought joy to us all. Thank you for supporting us to get our pupils back and learning in physical classrooms again!

A huge part of the successful return to school has been ensuring our school community is safe. We have now successfully carried out the three planned Lateral Flow Tests on secondary pupils in school. This has given all members of the community reassurance that our school is safe and ensures that we can prioritise learning. I really do have to thank every young person for their maturity in taking part in this important process. The efforts from the whole community will go a long way in our contribution to ending this pandemic that has affected all of us in some way or another. All secondary parents have received a letter this week about the next stage of testing and if your child is in the secondary phase, they should be carrying out home testing. Households, childcare and support bubbles of early years children, nursery children, primary and secondary-age pupils are able to access to regular rapid lateral flow testing and more information can be found here: [Lewisham Council - Rapid testing for COVID-19](#)

I wanted to write to all parents today regarding three other safety concerns.

## Traffic issues

Parents that drop their children off and/or pick them up will be aware of the serious traffic issues that we have experienced over the last fortnight. I am aware of at least two shocking incidents last week. One where a teenage boy was knocked off his bike in St Joseph's Vale by a car performing a 3-point turn and the driver then sped off without checking on the child. The second incident involved the driver of a car purposely steering into a member of staff. This was witnessed by the pupil that was sat in the car and a number of parents and staff. There have also been near misses involving cars and numerous confrontations between drivers. If this situation continues, I fear there could be a serious incident leading to life threatening or life changing injury.

The school is currently in discussion with parking enforcement, local councillors, police, and Lewisham traffic management regarding how best to deal with the situation. In the meantime, we have requested regular parking enforcement officers to patrol the area and issue penalty notices to drivers breaching parking regulations.

I urge all parents to walk to school with their children if possible. It is a great form of exercise for you and your children. It also reduces the risk of obesity and heart disease, improves mood, saves money on petrol and reduces environmental impact.

## Edible Drugs

We are aware of the concerns raised recently re Edible Drugs and this being promoted on some social media platforms such as Snapchat and Instagram. Recently the borough received an "Edibles Alert" after several young people were admitted to Lewisham hospital after consuming sweets infused with Cannabis oil. As you may be aware, cannabis can be mixed into cakes (hash brownies), tea, yoghurt, or sweets (gummies/lollipops). The amount of cannabis in these products can vary greatly and sometimes other harmful drugs are added too. The effects of consuming edibles are unpredictable, and it can be quite easy to accidentally take a larger dose. Edibles take between 1-3 hours to have an effect because food is absorbed into the bloodstream through the liver. Because it takes longer, the user may end up consuming larger amounts of the drug while thinking the drug is not working. Overdosing with Edibles can be a greater risk because of this! We suggest you monitor food packaging/ wrappers at home looking for wording such as CBD or THC suggesting the items are cannabis oil infused. Please be mindful of the medical needs if it becomes apparent your

child has consumed a drug laced substance. We also ask that all parents/carers are vigilant and discuss these issues with your children and if you have any concerns then please get in touch your child's Director of Learning or class teacher. We will be addressing this issue with pupils in our assemblies in the coming weeks and reminding pupils of the consequences of both consuming and of bring these items onto the Academy site. Below you will find a link to Frank, which gives more information and laws surrounding Edibles. [www.talktofrank.com/drug/cannabis](http://www.talktofrank.com/drug/cannabis).

### Lockdown

Although schools are back lockdown regulations continue. Pupils are expected to follow these restrictions both on their journey to the Academy and home at the end of the day. I am concerned that not all pupils are making their way straight home at the end of each day and instead spending time in Lewisham or surrounding areas. I urge all parents to ensure they know the whereabouts of their child outside of school times. As you know we expect pupil behaviour to be exemplary while traveling to and from the Academy and we have staff on duty in both Lewisham and the surrounding areas. Any pupil not following these clear instructions will face sanctions in the Academy the following day. Lewisham Safer Schools Police Team are also patrolling these areas and will be engaging with any pupil not following the restrictions and have the option of taking enforcement action by issuing fixed penalty notices. It is vital that we have your support on this issue in order to ensure the safety of our pupils but also that of the wider community.

End of term falls on Thursday April 1<sup>st</sup> with all pupils returning just over 2 weeks later on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> April. Pupils will be in school for the full day and finish at normal time. Unlike last year when the school was shut to most pupils we are looking forward to marking the end of Lent and the beginning of Easter together as a community. As the season of Lent draws to a close and Easter begins on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> April we will be celebrating a liturgy as a whole school community on Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> March via Zoom. We will continue to fundraise for our Lenten Charities, CAFOD and the Catholic Children's Society until the end of term, with raffle tickets for the Easter Egg raffle on sale for pupils in both the primary and secondary phase from today. Winners will be announced on the last day of term and we will also be selling Krispy Kreme doughnuts on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> March. Our fundraising will culminate in a Trainer Day for the Secondary phase on 1<sup>st</sup> April and a series of Easter activities for pupils in the primary phase to take part in, from making Easter nests and an Easter bonnet parade to the Stations of the Cross. We are very pleased to be able to celebrate together in school this year.

Thank you all for your continued support. As always, you can get in touch with us in the usual ways if you have any questions, queries or would like to give feedback on any issues raised in this letter or in general.

Yours faithfully



**Ms M Baldwin**  
Headteacher