

St Matthew Academy

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

Headteacher: Ms Miranda Baldwin

Head of Primary: Ms Joanna Chick



19 June 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

We have had the vast majority of our Year 10 pupils back in school this week for one day and it has been fantastic both for them and for us. It was clear from the smiles on everyone's faces that both pupils and staff were very happy to be back. All pupils and staff observed social distancing and followed all the government guidelines and the experience felt very safe and secure. All pupils were set 3 key academic and wellbeing targets- please ask to see these and support your child in making progress towards them this week and beyond. On their return pupils logged on to their google classrooms and focused on completing some of their English, Maths and Science work. Pupils also had a 1:1 with a member of staff to discuss issues around lockdown, such as their mental and physical well-being, their remote learning work rate and output and a general catch up. During these sessions it became clear that whilst some pupils are keeping to a good routine and working hard at home, many are not. This is worrying for many reasons including the gaps they will have in their knowledge and skills which will put them at a disadvantage when they take their GCSE exams next summer.

We were especially concerned about the **sleep patterns** of many of our pupils. A large portion of the pupils we spoke stated that they were staying up incredibly late (**some till 5/6am**) spending a huge amount of time on devices and screens leading them to sleep for the majority of the day. This is clearly an unhealthy routine to fall into and has many negative consequences. Research shows it can affect energy levels, motivation and be considerably detrimental to an individual's mental health and physical growth. As parents and carers it is hugely important that you monitor your child's sleep and insist on a healthy and suitable sleep routine. Some suggestions that can help with this are ensuring phones are left in a separate room at night, turning off Wi-Fi at a set time each evening and that pupils are out of bed and working by 10am each day.

Please also take the time to monitor work that is completed at home, it is apparent that many of our pupils have not been truthful about the quality and quantity of work completed. A quick 10 minute school based catch up each day and taking the time to go through each of their online classrooms with your child would be extremely motivating and supportive. We do recognise that this is no mean feat, motivating pupils in home learning is a real challenge so if you would like additional advice on guidance on how to best support your child with their home learning please get in touch with their tutor or Miss Dunne, Director of Learning(vdu@stmatthewacademy.co.uk).

One last important factor to consider is diet and physical activity. We have had conversations with the year group this week about the importance of taking a break, getting some fresh air and ensuring a good healthy diet each day. A fresh fruit break during a long period of working can work wonders for the brain!

We are looking forward to offering some taught sessions to all Year 10 pupils during the final 3 weeks of this term. This means they will be expected to attend school more frequently and for a longer day. A detailed schedule and an individualised timetable will be posted out to all families next week. Please continue to support us and your child by ensuring they attend these sessions. We understand that the past few months have been incredibly challenging for you and your child however, in order for our pupils to be back in the right frame of mind for good learning and to make the progress they need to reach their full potential next year and beyond, it is vital that normal school day routines are insisted upon to ensure they are successful in their futures.

We look forward to seeing your child again next week on the same day and time as this week. Thank you in advance for your continued support.

Yours faithfully

Emma Thurston
Deputy Headteacher

Alistair Young
Deputy Headteacher

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