



ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

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مدرسة القديسة مريم الكاثوليكية الثانوية

ص.ب. ٥٢٢٣٢، دبي - الإمارات العربية المتحدة

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OUR REF :

TRN: 100483609200003

Friday, 10th September 2021

To: The Parents of students in Years 1-13 – WEEKLY UPDATE FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2021-2022 (AHEAD OF WEEK THREE)

Dear Parents,

Greetings from Saint Mary's. We trust that this update finds you and your families safe and healthy. We would like you to read on and familiarize yourselves with all the important news for the upcoming week. (Week Three)

IF YOUR CHILD HAS TESTED POSITIVE FOR COVID-19, YOU MUST TELL US WITHOUT ANY DELAY BY FILLING IN THE LINK ON THE WEBSITE AND UPLOADING A COPY OF THE PCR TEST-Many parents are not following this critical step and we only get to know from DHA days later. In this event we will be unable to contact trace and this could lead to multiple infections among children. WE MUST BE RESPONSIBLE IN KEEPING OUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY AS SAFE AS WE CAN.

PLEASE DO NOT SEND CHILDREN TO SCHOOL IF THEY SHOW ANY SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19. WE WILL HAVE TO CALL YOU TO TAKE THEM HOME AND THEN A NEGATIVE PCR IS NEEDED TO RETURN TO SCHOOL.

1) STUDENTS COMING IN FOR BLENDED LEARNING (What do parents need to keep in mind ?):

- a) **CHECK FOR BLENDED LEARNING SCHEDULE SENT BY THE CLASS TEACHER:** Please check your child's school email for the Blended Learning Schedule sent by your child's class teacher. Please note that this schedule must be strictly adhered to for the month of September 2021.

b) TAKE YOUR CHILD'S TEMPERATURE BEFORE HE/SHE LEAVES HOME:

All parents must take the child's temperature in the morning before leaving home. **If a child's temperature is 37.5 degrees Celsius or more, the child must be kept at home. If a child displays one or more of the symptoms listed below, kindly keep them at home.**

Things to keep in mind when self-screening each morning are as follows:

Most common symptoms

- ❖ Fever (temperature is greater than 37.5 degrees Celsius)
- ❖ Persistent dry coughing is present
- ❖ Fatigue (undue/uncommon levels of tiredness)

Less common symptoms:

- aches and pains
- sore throat
- diarrhea
- conjunctivitis
- headache
- loss of taste or smell
- a rash on skin, or discolouration of fingers or toes

Serious symptoms:

- difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- chest pain or pressure
- loss of speech or movement

c) CHILDREN USING STS MUST BE ACCOMPANIED AT THE WAITING POINT BY ONE PARENT OR GUARDIAN:

Children using STS must be accompanied by either one parent or guardian so that in the event of a temperature of over 37.5 degrees Celsius being recorded, the child can be taken back by the parent or guardian.

d) TALK TO YOUR CHILD ABOUT MASK SAFETY AND GOOD HYGIENE HABITS:

It is important to have these essential conversations with children depending on their age about wearing the mask correctly at all times. Speak to children about good hygiene habits and practice the correct method of hand washing.

e) **ENTRY AND EXIT MEASURES:** There will be a security guard at each entry gate and the temperature will be taken of each staff and student upon entry. ***The school will use 2 different entry points to avoid crowding at any particular gate.*** If a child is found to have a temperature of 37.5 degrees Celsius or more, the child will immediately be taken to the **ISOLATION ROOM** and parents will be informed to come and pick up the child immediately. Parents must co-operate in not delaying in picking up their child. We have often had to wait several hours in the past and quite often parents are not reachable on the phone. Parents must be EXTRA ALERT in light of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

ENTRY PROCEDURES:

The school will use staggered timings for different groups of student classified by :

1) Students who use the buses *GATE 5*- These students must be dropped off between 6:45 and 7:00 am. The bus guardians and school teachers on the buses will stagger entry so there is no crowding and children will be held safely on the bus until it is time for them to move towards the designated entry point. **STS BUS USERS WILL USE ONLY GATE NUMBER 5 FOR ENTRY.**

2) Students who use public transport *GATE 4*: ARRIVAL TIME FROM 6:45 - 7:00 AM These students must reach the designated **gate NO. 4**. These students will be admitted with temperature scanning only through a designated entry point that leads them directly to the corridors to their classes.

3) Students whose parents drop them off *GATE 5*: ARRIVAL TIME : 6:45-7:00 AM STRICTLY - Parents have to leave the child with the school staff at the gate and procedures will be followed for temperature scanning and then moving them to their designated classrooms. This time slot is to be strictly followed for drop off and no child will be admitted before this slot. **STRICTLY NO DOUBLE PARKING OUTSIDE GATE NUMBER 5.** Double Parking puts our children , staff and other parents at a huge risk and is a traffic violation.

EXIT PROCEDURES:

The school will use staggered timings for different groups of student classified by:

1) Students who use the buses-

These students will be guided by school staff from 1: 25 PM onwards in a staggered manner (year group wise) to the respective quadrangles where they can be well spaced out. Students will be taken from there by school staff and bus guardians to the buses.

2) Students who use public transport:

These students will be guided by school staff to a designated exit only for them from 1:35 pm onwards.

3) Students whose parents drop them off:

Parents who pick up their children will have to come in through **GATE NO. 5** and wait in a designated pick up area with physical distancing and the children will be brought there in a staggered manner. The slot for parents who pick up their children is from **1:35-1:45 pm ONLY**. Primary children will not be sent out on their own. **PLEASE MAKE SURE THAT NO VEHICLE IS DOUBLE PARKED OUTSIDE GATE NO. 5. OLDER CHILDREN WILL BE PERMITTED TO LEAVE THROUGH GATE NO. 5 AND MEET PARENTS PARKED IN PARKING SLOTS OUTSIDE.**

f) USE OF FACE MASKS BY ALL STUDENTS AND STAFF (EXCEPT STUDENTS BELOW 6 YEARS) :

In line with current guidance, face masks are mandatory at SMCHS for all children in Year 2 and above and all adults.

All will wear a face mask whilst at school. 3 masks are required per day. (One is to be kept as backup in case of damage or tearing to a face mask being used)

Exceptions include:

- ❖ Students under the age of 6 years
- ❖ For teachers and People of Determination that have hearing impairments, transparent masks may be used
- ❖ Children who are unable to wear masks due to medical reasons will be allowed to wear a face shield but only if supported by a medical certificate.

For all other students and staff, masks may only be removed during snack break , provided strict social distancing is maintained. **Children have to wear a face shield while eating unmasked.**

g) SANITIZER:

All staff and students are required to carry a personal hand sanitizer with 70% - 80% alcohol content. Sanitizers will be available in public areas for use by staff and students.

HYGIENE KIT :

Every child must have a hygiene kit that is sent daily in the school bag. The hygiene kit must contain :

- ❖ THREE face masks
- ❖ ONE FACE SHIELD
- ❖ One personal hand sanitizer containing 70-80% alcohol and approved for use by children.
- ❖ One pack of sanitizing wipes
- ❖ Tissues for personal use

GLOVES:

Gloves are not mandated but may be used at the discretion of students.

However if students are using gloves, they must carry an extra pair and once removed they need to be disposed.

HANDWASHING :

Hand washing remains a key preventative measure against Covid-19 and so students will be encouraged to wash their hands regularly and correctly.

Teachers will model hand washing for younger children so that they know the correct way to wash their hands.

Hand washing stations will be equipped with liquid soap and disposable paper towels and posters with effective hand washing and drying instructions

h) BREAK TIMES:

Keeping in mind the higher temperatures currently prevailing, students will be kept in their classes during the break. Once temperatures are more feasible for outdoor comfort, one class per corridor will be given a break time outside on a rotation basis with full physical distancing to ensure the safety of all.

i) VENTILATION:

Our school does not have a central AC system and each class is serviced by separate Air conditioning units. Filters will be cleaned regularly and units are regularly serviced. Windows will be kept slightly open for ventilation and class room doors will be open from time to time for fresh air circulation.

j) NO PARENTS ALLOWED ON THE PREMISES WHILE CHILDREN ARE IN SCHOOL, except while picking up younger children from the designated area.

k) The SCHOOL CANTEEN WILL NOT BE OPERATIONAL AT THIS TIME.

Kindly send a healthy snack with your child and sufficient water or juice. Children will eat their snack in their classrooms under the supervision of their teachers.

Water coolers will not be operational.

Parents must send sufficient water with their child. Water bottles must not be left in school. Any bottles left in school will have to be discarded according to the protocols.

We have installed vending machines for water, though we still encourage parents to send sufficient water from home as this is a much safer option.

I) UNIFORMS:

Students coming in for blended learning on particular days will need to wear the school uniform from the month of October 2021.

Girls uniforms and the boys' navy blue trousers are available for purchase from our distributors, IRIS and they may be contacted on 04-3966615 for Dubai and on 06-5444500 for Sharjah.

The boys white polo t-shirts, the sports uniforms and the winter hoodies will have to be purchased from the school. **(Refer to our circular of 26th August)**

Students coming in for blended learning will be allowed to wear coloured clothes for the month of September 2021 and the following guidelines must be adhered to for both boys and girls.

- Full Jeans will be allowed – dark blue or black only and jeans must not be torn or distressed in any way.
- Plain t-shirts or shirts for boys.
- Plain t-shirts or blouses for girls **(FULL MODESTY is expected)**
- Full Jeans will be allowed for girls– dark blue or black only and jeans must not be torn or distressed in any way.
- Skirts below the knee (when sitting)
- Salwar kameez.
- Black sports shoes for boys and white sports shoes for girls
- NO LONG HAIR FOR BOYS AND NO COLOURED HAIR/ HAIR TINTS/ HAIR HIGHLIGHTS FOR GIRLS. Any coloured hair will have to be dyed back to its original colour if a child is coming in for on- site lessons.
- No nail polish or make up.

2) TRAVEL DECLARATION:

KHDA has informed us that in line with new protocols for face-to-face learning, please note that it is no longer obligatory for schools to request parents to submit a 'Travel & Health Declaration Form', as this is embedded within the wider Dubai Protocols.

3) CRITICAL AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE REQUIRED IF ANY STUDENT TESTS POSITIVE, EVEN AT THE WEEKEND:

If any child shows symptoms of Covid-19, they must be kept at home and a diagnosis must be sought from an approved medical practitioner. **If a child tests positive, the parent must use the link on the school website and fill out the required details and upload a copy of a PCR test that has been conducted. These are critical DHA**

requirements and have to be treated with the utmost seriousness. The school will then contact the parents of any other child who was in contact with the child in question as well as staff members who will also have to self isolate for 10 days as part of contact tracing requirements. ***A DHA Clearance Certificate for a child who previously tested positive is also required in order for the child to return to school.*** In addition in case a child or a parent, sibling or any family member of a child tests POSITIVE for COVID-19, an email must be sent to Ms. Lise-Ann and Dr. Dayani without delay and the child, by virtue of being a close contact, must be kept at home to self isolate for 10 days.

4) PAYMENT OF FIRST TERM FEES :

Students in year 12 can now pay the first term fees as the SKIPLY app is updated for you.

The window for payment of the FIRST TERM FEES is between the 26th of August, 2021 and 30th September 2021. Fees that have not been paid by the 30th of September 2021 will be considered OUTSTANDING and commensurate actions will be applied as per regulator policy. We would like to remind ALL parents that timely fee payments are important for the sustained functioning of the school.

FOR MORE DETAILS ON FEE PAYMENTS KINDLY REFER TO THE SECTION ON FEES IN OUR CIRCULAR DATED 26TH AUGUST 2021.

5) KHDA PARENT-SCHOOL CONTRACT-

The KHDA PARENT-SCHOOL CONTRACT has been published for all new admissions and parents are requested to kindly sign this electronically without fail.

6) READING CHECK FOR NEW ADMISSIONS TO YEARS ONE THROUGH FOUR:

A simple check for age appropriate reading will be conducted for ALL new admissions from years one through four. An appointment slot will be communicated to you via the student's school email ID. This assessment is to gauge whether the student requires additional support to gain age appropriate reading skills. Kindly ensure that your child is well prepared and ready to display his/her reading skills to an adult for a 15 minute time slot. The student support services team will get in touch with you via the student school email ID to schedule a time for this.

7) SIMS PARENT APP/ ACTIVE LEARN:

Please note that these are still in process and our IT Support will be sending out the invitation and credentials for the same in some time. We will let you know via a circular when that process gets rolled out. Kindly do not email IT Support for this at the moment.

8) BOARD EXAMINATION FEES:

We would like you to be informed well in advance that EDEXCEL LONDON BOARD EXAMINATION FEES will be collected in the month of NOVEMBER 2021 for students in years ELEVEN and THIRTEEN. We trust that this will help you to budget accordingly. You can check your KHDA Parent-School contract for the BOARD EXAM FEE AMOUNT for each year group.

9) URGENT QUERIES AND CONCERNS:

If you have any urgent queries and concerns, kindly send an email to our Vice Principal , Ms. Lise-Ann on lpinto-smchs@smgeducation.org and she will get back to you. Please include your telephone number in case she needs to call you.

10) A FULL RETURN TO FACE-TO-FACE LEARNING FROM 3RD OCTOBER (WILL BE PHASED OUT FROM THE WEEK BEFORE THE 3RD OF OCTOBER):

As all parents will be aware , the new protocols issued by KHDA mandate a full face-to-face return of ALL students . From the 3rd of October 2021, there will be no option for Distance Learning. In order to have a seamless start where all cohorts will be on site from the 3rd of October we will be phasing in cohorts from the week prior to the 3rd in order to avoid crowding as well as getting ALL students used to entry and exit procedures and the 'new routines' ahead.

MORE NEWS WILL FOLLOW IN OUR NEXT WEEK'S UPDATE.

We take this opportunity to wish each and every one of you a safe and happy weekend .

Yours sincerely



Mr. Paul Asir Joseph
(Principal)

