

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 : 104153998000003

DATE: Friday, 27th March 2026.

To: Parents of Students in Years 1-13

DISTANCE LEARNING FROM 30th MARCH TO 3rd APRIL 2026

Dear Parents,

Greetings from St. Mary's. We trust that this update finds you all safe and well. Please be assured of our prayers and best wishes for every member of our Marian Family.

We thank you all for your feedback as well as feedback received from students and teachers that have helped us review our current practice and make some adjustments and adaptations, keeping in mind student wellbeing and support as well as challenges for our very young learners.

We would also like to say with all humility that our teachers are doing the best they can, sometimes under very challenging conditions. Your patience and understanding goes a long way as we are also navigating the same uncertainties that you are. There is no Rule book for a situation like this and so with your feedback and our own review of current practices, we will make changes to improve as best we can. We would truly appreciate that parents understand this.

DISTANCE LEARNING -PHASE WISE

YEARS 11 AND 13

Students of Years 11 and 13 will have their online Mock Examinations on the 30th and 31st of March and on the 1st of April. The 2nd and 3rd of April are study holidays.

Students in these two-year groups **MUST** attend all examinations online. Kindly read ***separate circular on examination rules and regulations.***

Any further directives after the 3rd of April will be communicated as soon as they are received from KHDA.

WHY ROUTINES ARE PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT FOR CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS DURING TIMES OF UNCERTAINTY

Children today often surprise us with their ability to be resilient. We do understand that in the current situation of conflict, they are also dealing with feelings of fear, confusion and uncertainty and therefore one powerful way to help children navigate this period is through the use of ROUTINES. Simple as they may seem, routines provide structure through activities that share key characteristics:

- They have a beginning and an end.
- They are usually performed in a specific way
- They often follow a predictable sequence.

In the current times of uncertainty, a routine becomes something dependable for a child to count on. Routines serve the same purpose of predictability which becomes overwhelmingly important in times of conflict and confusion.

The education regulators have been wonderful in ensuring the continuity of learning while still ensuring the safety and security of students and school communities.

For this period of distance learning, we will also be following a set routine that all students in Years 1-10 and Year 12 are expected to follow.

- **School hours are from 7:10 am until 1:50 pm. Please find our lesson timings posted below. Students must be ready by 7:05 am.**
- **All students MUST be present for the morning Registration with their class teachers at 7:10 am sharp on all days and at 7:05 am on Fridays.**
- **The National Anthem will be played daily and there will be a morning prayer during registration.**
- **All students MUST be present for lessons in FULL SCHOOL UNIFORM and in PE uniform on days that PE is time tabled.**
- **During distance learning, attendance will be taken at each lesson, and you will be informed via email if your child has missed certain lessons.**
- **Teachers will finish lessons 5-7 minutes earlier to give children a screen break and time to use the restroom.**
- **Please ensure that your child is fully ready with all that they need in terms of the technology as well as their writing materials and textbooks.**
- **In the case of double lessons, the teacher will give students a 5-7-minute break between both lessons as a screen break.**

YEARS ONE THROUGH FOUR

Please note that 3rd April will be a completely Asynchronous day being Good Friday - One task each will be set for English, Mathematics and Science which must be completed and shown to the teacher the following week.

Live Synchronous Lessons are applicable to students of these year groups for **ALL SUBJECTS** except PE, Guided Reading Arabic, Music, Art and Activity.

During morning registration, teachers will conduct Mindfulness and other simple activities for children.

Guided Reading English and French will be Asynchronous.

ONE Synchronous and ONE Asynchronous lesson for Values Education, Citizenship and Islamic during the week.

Zoom links will be posted on a daily document and sent to you daily.

What has changed for week two based on feedback from students, teachers and parents?

We understand that there are often barriers to access remote learning especially with younger children who have both working parents. We are also trying to be very mindful of screen time for our younger learners and so we have made the following key changes after reviewing our current practice.

- 1) We have asked our teachers of Maths, English, Science and Arabic to send you short videos at the end of each day focusing on any key concepts that they have taught. These will be posted in your child's Google Classroom or class Group Email.. This is to aid children who might have not been able to join live lessons or where working parents might need to review these.
- 2) When there is a double lesson for a particular subject on a given day, we will have a live lesson for the first lesson and then manageable work will be explained to the children for the second, so they do not have to be on the screen for a long time.

YEARS FIVE AND SIX

Please note that 3rd April will be a completely Asynchronous day being Good Friday-One task each will be set for English, Mathematics and Science which must be completed and turned into GC by the end of the day.

Live Synchronous Lessons are applicable to students of these year groups for **ALL SUBJECTS** except PE, Library, Music, Art and Activity.

What has changed for week two based on feedback from students, teachers and parents?

We understand that there are often barriers to access remote learning especially where there may be sharing of devices. We are also trying to be very mindful of screen time for our primary students and so we have made the following key changes after reviewing our current practice.

- 1) We have asked our teachers of Maths, English, Science and Arabic to send you teaching material in the form of short PPTs at the end of each day focusing on any key concepts that they have taught. These will be posted in your child's Google Classroom. This is to aid children who might have not been able to join live lessons or where working parents might need to review these.
- 2) We will also send you ONE SINGLE PDF document with all the zoom links posted on it, so it is easier for students to access in one place.
- 3) When there is a double lesson for English Language or Arabic on a given day, we will have a live lesson for the first lesson and then manageable work will be explained to the children for the second, so they do not have to be on the screen for a long time.

YEARS SEVEN AND EIGHT

Please note that 3rd April will be a completely Asynchronous day being Good Friday - One task each will be set for English, Mathematics and Science which must be completed and turned into GC before the end of the day.

Live Synchronous Lessons are applicable to students of these year groups for ALL SUBJECTS except PE, Library, Art and Activity.

French will be Asynchronous and one lesson of Geography for Year 8 will be Asynchronous. One lesson of English Language/ Literature and Arabic will also be Asynchronous for Years 7 and 8.

Zoom links will be posted in your child's subject GC

YEARS NINE AND TEN

Please note that 3rd April will be a completely Asynchronous day being Good Friday-One task each will be set for English, Mathematics and Arabic which must be completed and turned into GC by the end of the day.

Live Synchronous Lessons are applicable to students of these year groups for ALL SUBJECTS except PE and Library

One lesson of English Language and Arabic will also be Asynchronous for Years 9 and 10.

Zoom links will be posted in your child's subject GC

Year TWELVE

Please note that 3rd April will be a completely Asynchronous day being Good Friday-One task each will be set for Mathematics and Business Studies which must be completed and turned into GC by the end of the day.

Live Synchronous Lessons are applicable to students of these year groups for ALL SUBJECTS

We are trying our best to consider student wellbeing and not have extended screen time for younger children.

We appeal to parents to ensure that children are attending required lessons and that they are maintaining respectful standards of behaviour online.

It is extremely important to speak to your children currently about the value of sensitivity and empathy for others. This is particularly in relation to respecting teachers and fellow students at a time when everyone is navigating a period of uncertainty. We have had to deal with cases in the week before the Spring Break where students behaviour did not reflect our core Marian values and this is even more disappointing in the current situation.

TECHNOLOGICAL and LEARNING READINESS TO CONTINUE WITH DISTANCE LEARNING

- 1) Please ensure that the latest version of ZOOM is installed on your child's laptop. Zoom will be used for ALL LIVE/SYNCHRONOUS LESSONS
- 2) For Asynchronous lessons, work will be posted in Google Classroom or Class Group email (for younger students).
- 3) Please ensure that your child has a fully working device with a fully working camera/webcam. The video MUST BE TURNED ON FOR ALL LESSONS. We will remove students whose videos are off. KINDLY ENSURE WORKING TECHNOLOGY. This is for reasons of safeguarding.
- 4) No filming/ photography of any part of a lesson or screen during a lesson or content of a lesson is permitted. Strict action will be taken in accordance with UAE cybercrime laws.
- 5) Parents are requested to check their email daily for important updates from the government and/or the school. We will communicate with you daily if your child has been absent or if your child has not been following the regulations in accordance with online learning.
- 6) **PARENTS MUST INFORM THE CLASS TEACHER VIA EMAIL ONLY, THE PREVIOUS NIGHT if your child is going to be absent the following day.** Please note that this has not been followed by MANY parents and it is a matter of child safeguarding that must be treated very seriously.
- 7) No eating or drinking during lessons. A virtual classroom must be respected in the same way that we respect an on-site classroom. Please talk to your children about this.
- 8) Please reach out to your child's class teacher via email if your child is struggling with anything in particular.
- 9) We strongly advise parents to refrain from exposing students to distressing news and social media which often have unverified and overly sensationalised material that causes more harm than good. Children cannot be treated in the same way as adults, and it is best to stick to familiar routines for them. This helps children feel safe both physically and emotionally.
- 10) Kindly inform your child's class teacher via email if you are currently out of the UAE.

We have put together a list of FAQs which we hope will be helpful. Please understand that the starting point for us is ALWAYS OUR CARE for the WELLBEING of our children. We care for them and we do understand your problems too. We also trust that you are empathetic to our challenges.

1) Why does my child have to wear a school uniform to attend lesson from home?

The requirement of a school uniform even for online lessons is to keep that sense of routine going for children at this time of uncertainty. It also creates a sense of equity among all students and is a big element of self-discipline.

2) I have travelled, but I have not carried my child's uniform. What do my children wear in this case?

We understand the haste of travel under the current circumstances and so in this case we strongly recommend that boys wear a white T-shirt/ and navy blue or black trousers and girls wear a white T-shirt/ blouse and a navy blue or black skirt or trousers.

3) Will my child be marked absent if he/she has missed the registration but has attended all other live lessons?

We will be flexible where there is an occasional occurrence, but we do expect ALL children to attend the morning registration which is when we have the morning prayer and the playing of the National Anthem. This creates a meaningful routine for children.

4) We are sharing devices among children in my family and so my child might not be able to attend ALL live lessons.

We do understand that this conflict has thrown up sudden challenges that we might not have anticipated so, in this case, please send an email to your child's class teacher explaining the situation. Please send the email from your email ID and not your child's.

5) Why can't the school send a single zoom link for all lessons for younger children?

The main reason for this is **SECURITY AND SAFETY** of the virtual classroom for ALL students and staff. A single link cannot provide the added layer of security provided by separate links. Teachers are also different across various subjects.

6) Why can't my child join a zoom meeting with a parent ID or their personal ID?

The main reason for this is **SECURITY AND SAFETY** of the virtual classroom for our learners and teachers. We are using a domain-based platform which is restricted to only SMG users. This ensures a robust and secure mode of delivery of remote lessons.

7) Can I talk to my child's teacher when I see them in an online session ?

This is not possible because the synchronous lessons are a space only for students and teachers. If you have any concerns, you can send an email to the class teacher or to the vice principal. Please do not approach or engage with any teachers during an online session.

8) Why can't I access my child's school locker as they have left books there?

KHDA has currently mandated that the premises cannot be accessed by parents, students and even staff except critical staff required for operational purposes. While we understand that this can be distressing, might we suggest that children have their classmates share important material for the time being. Our teachers are also providing useful PPTs that might help to an extent.

9) Why can't my child eat or drink during class?

Firstly, we would recommend that your child keeps a glass or bottle of water nearby to stay hydrated. As far as eating is concerned, the virtual classroom is much like a normal classroom, and we maintain the same etiquette and discipline of a regular classroom. Children may eat during the break or in between lessons.

10) My teacher scheduled a zoom lesson but then sent an Asynchronous task, any reason for this sudden change?

Just like the families in our school communities, teachers too experience sudden issues like power outages or internet issues with loss of connectivity and therefore these sudden changes might sometimes occur.

11) My child seems very stressed and fatigued. Is there someone I can reach out to?

Your child's class teacher is always a good first point of contact because they know your child well. However, our school counsellors are ready to help.

To contact our Primary counsellor please send an email to:

natasha.joseph-smchs@smgeducation.org

To contact our secondary school counsellor, please send an email to:

samantha-smchs@smgeducation.org

12) Who can I reach out to for any other issue concerning the current distance learning or other important queries?

For minor issues, you can send an email to your child's class teacher. But for any other larger issues, kindly email our Vice Principal on l.pinto-smchs@smgeducation.org

13) How can I manage my child's wellbeing at this time?

Our teachers are keeping a close eye on the children and are concerned about them. We are doing some simple mindfulness and relaxation activities with primary children. We will also be sending you useful and practical wellbeing resources that you can use to keep your child happy and resilient during this challenging phase.

14) When will on-site lessons resume?

While we cannot answer this question at this time, we are closely following all directives by KHDA and we will keep updating you with any changes in directives without any delay.

15) How will the teachers know if my child is learning?

AFL – Assessment for Learning continues even in the current mode of delivery. For younger children, teachers use short quizzes or Kahoot-based quizzes, short verbal responses, tasks on Active Learn Platform to assess students’ learning. For older students more structured tasks as well as shorter verbal responses give teachers key indication of what learning is taking place and what needs to be adjusted.

16) Will it be my choice to send my child back to school once we re-open?

We will have to wait for the education regulator’s decision on this.

17) What options do I have if I am currently outside the UAE?

We are aware that some families have temporarily re-located due to the current situation. It is heartening to know that most flights are operating to destinations where our families hail from. We will also have to wait for regulator directives on this.

18) How will schools prevent students from falling behind?

We are keeping parents updated when we notice a major shift in a child’s overall attitude to learning. However, it becomes even more important at this time for parents to partner with us and monitor your child’s academics more closely than you might usually do.

19) What support is in place for working parents?

We have asked teachers of younger children to send you some short teaching videos next week that will help if both parents are working. We are also sending you daily updates if children are missing live sessions. Teachers will also be sending PPTs that you can use to review and some other information in bite-size chunks which will be simpler for children to work with.

20) Do I have to pay my child’s re-registration fees now?

There is no change to the process of re-registration, in fact KHDA has already begun the process of next year’s planning with schools in terms of calendars etc. Re-registration fees for next year must be paid as per our circular.

LET US TEACH OUR CHILDREN THAT THE KEY VALUES AT THIS TIME ARE: RESPECT, INTEGRITY, RESILIENCE AND EMPATHY.

We understand that these can be very confusing times for families, but we are certain that the UAE Government is doing its best to ensure our safety and security. It is important that we rely only on verified sources for information in these extenuating circumstances and be supportive of one another.

We wish you all safety in your day-to-day routines as we navigate the current uncertainty. Please be reassured of our prayers for everyone.

Yours sincerely,

Mr. Paul Asir Joseph
(Principal)



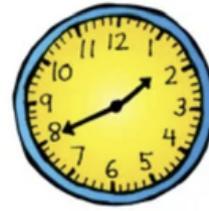


ZOOM USAGE & REGULATIONS: YEARS 1 TO 4



JOINING LESSON

- Use your school email to join.
- Wait quietly in the Waiting Room.
- Use your real name.



BE PREPARED

- Be on time.
- Sit in a quiet place.
- Have the books and material ready.



CAMERA & AUDIO

- Keep your camera ON.
- Keep your microphone OFF (muted).
- Raise your hand if you want to speak.



LISTEN CAREFULLY

- Use chat only when teacher asks you to use it for the lesson.
- Do not chat with your classmates.
- No eating during class.



BE RESPECTFUL

- Do not interrupt others.
- Use polite words.
- Stay focused on the lesson.



BE READY TO LEARN

- Act like you are in school.
- An Adult needs to be present.
- Wear the school uniform.



ONLINE SAFETY

- Do not share your screen unless your teacher allows.
- Only students should join the lesson.
- No games or other apps during class.



REMEMBER

- Your teacher will give a reminder if needed.
- Continued disruption may mean leaving the lesson.
- Parents may be informed.

Let's make online learning safe, happy, and fun for everyone!



ZOOM USAGE & REGULATIONS: YEARS 5 & 6



To ensure a productive, safe, and disciplined digital learning environment, the following regulations are mandatory for all Years 5 and 6 online sessions. While we grant senior students (Year 11 and A-Levels) greater autonomy, these stricter protocols are in place for Years 5 -10 to meet our safeguarding obligations and maintain academic focus.

STUDENT ADMISSION & APPEARANCE

Uniform Policy: All students must wear the official school uniform shirt or blouse while attending online lessons.

Identity Verification: Access is strictly limited to students using their official school email ID.

Naming Convention: Students must use their full legal names. Nicknames are strictly prohibited; students using aliases will not be admitted.

Profile Pic: To maintain a professional classroom environment, your Zoom profile picture must be one of the following:

- A clear headshot of yourself wearing the school uniform (shirt/blouse).
- The default 'Initial' icon that Zoom provides automatically.

VIRTUAL CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

The Waiting Room: Teachers will use the Waiting Room feature to vet all participants before entry and to manage latecomers.

Audio Controls: All students will be Muted on Entry. To minimize interruptions, students must remain muted throughout the lesson. Teachers will manually unmute individual students only when they are called upon to participate.

Camera Policy: Cameras must remain ON at all times to monitor engagement.

Protocol: If a student's camera is off, the teacher will provide one reminder. If the camera remains off, the student will be removed from the lesson immediately.

No Breakout Rooms: Due to the specific management needs of these year groups, Breakout Rooms are prohibited for Years 5 and 6.

DISCIPLINE & TECHNICAL SAFEGUARDS

Screen Sharing: Restricting screen sharing to the Host/Co-host is mandatory. Students are not permitted to share their screens under any circumstances.

DISRUPTION PROTOCOL:

Private Warning: For minor disruptions, teachers will send a private chat message to the student before addressing the behavior publicly.

Hold/Removal: Teachers may use the "Attendee On-Hold" feature to temporarily suspend a student's access or remove them entirely if the disruption persists.

Parental Involvement: In cases of recurring behavioral issues or technical non-compliance, teachers will formally engage parents via email or scheduled meetings.

Students are reminded to be respectful in lessons and maintain high standards of behaviour during remote lessons.



ZOOM USAGE & REGULATIONS: YEARS 7 & 8



To ensure a productive, safe, and disciplined digital learning environment, the following regulations are mandatory for all Years 7 and 8 online sessions. While we grant senior students (Year 11 and A-Levels) greater autonomy, these stricter protocols are in place for Years 7, 8, 9 and 10 to meet our safeguarding obligations and maintain academic focus.

STUDENT ADMISSION & APPEARANCE

Uniform Policy: All students must wear the official school uniform shirt or blouse while attending online lessons.

Identity Verification: Access is strictly limited to students using their official school email ID.

Naming Convention: Students must use their full legal names. Nicknames are strictly prohibited; students using aliases will not be admitted.

Profile Pic: To maintain a professional classroom environment, your Zoom profile picture must be one of the following:

- A clear headshot of yourself wearing the school uniform (shirt/blouse).
- The default 'Initial' icon that Zoom provides automatically.

VIRTUAL CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

The Waiting Room: Teachers will use the Waiting Room feature to vet all participants before entry and to manage latecomers.

Audio Controls: All students will be Muted on Entry. To minimize interruptions, students must remain muted throughout the lesson. Teachers will manually unmute individual students only when they are called upon to participate.

Camera Policy: Cameras must remain ON at all times to monitor engagement.

Protocol: If a student's camera is off, the teacher will provide one reminder. If the camera remains off, the student will be removed from the lesson immediately.

No Breakout Rooms: Due to the specific management needs of these year groups, Breakout Rooms are prohibited for Years 7 and 8.

DISCIPLINE & TECHNICAL SAFEGUARDS

Screen Sharing: Restricting screen sharing to the Host/Co-host is mandatory. Students are not permitted to share their screens under any circumstances.

DISRUPTION PROTOCOL:

Private Warning: For minor disruptions, teachers will send a private chat message to the student before addressing the behavior publicly.

Hold/Removal: Teachers may use the "Attendee On-Hold" feature to temporarily suspend a student's access or remove them entirely if the disruption persists.

Parental Involvement: In cases of recurring behavioral issues or technical non-compliance, teachers will formally engage parents via email or scheduled meetings.

Students are reminded to be respectful in lessons and maintain high standards of behaviour during remote lessons.



ZOOM USAGE & REGULATIONS: YEARS 9 & 10



To ensure a productive, safe, and disciplined digital learning environment, the following regulations are mandatory for all Years 9 and 10 online sessions. While we grant senior students (Year 11 and A-Levels) greater autonomy, these stricter protocols are in place for Years 9 and 10 to meet our safeguarding obligations and maintain academic focus.

STUDENT ADMISSION & APPEARANCE

Uniform Policy: All students must wear the official school uniform shirt or blouse while attending online lessons.

Identity Verification: Access is strictly limited to students using their official school email ID.

Naming Convention: Students must use their full legal names. Nicknames are strictly prohibited; students using aliases will not be admitted.

Profile Pic: To maintain a professional classroom environment, your Zoom profile picture must be one of the following:

- A clear headshot of yourself wearing the school uniform (shirt/blouse).
- The default 'Initial' icon that Zoom provides automatically.

VIRTUAL CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

The Waiting Room: Teachers will use the Waiting Room feature to vet all participants before entry and to manage latecomers.

Audio Controls: All students will be Muted on Entry. To minimize interruptions, students must remain muted throughout the lesson. Teachers will manually unmute individual students only when they are called upon to participate.

Camera Policy: Cameras must remain ON at all times to monitor engagement.

Protocol: If a student's camera is off, the teacher will provide one reminder. If the camera remains off, the student will be removed from the lesson immediately.

No Breakout Rooms: Due to the specific management needs of these year groups, Breakout Rooms are prohibited for Years 9 and 10.

DISCIPLINE & TECHNICAL SAFEGUARDS

Screen Sharing: Restricting screen sharing to the Host/Co-host is mandatory. Students are not permitted to share their screens under any circumstances.

DISRUPTION PROTOCOL:

Private Warning: For minor disruptions, teachers will send a private chat message to the student before addressing the behavior publicly.

Hold/Removal: Teachers may use the "Attendee On-Hold" feature to temporarily suspend a student's access or remove them entirely if the disruption persists.

Parental Involvement: In cases of recurring behavioral issues or technical non-compliance, teachers will formally engage parents via email or scheduled meetings.

Students are reminded to be respectful in lessons and maintain high standards of behaviour during remote lessons.