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15th December 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

Before we break up this week, I want to thank you for all the exceptional support for your children. They are delightful, hardworking and polite. This term has been one of the great achievements. It has been a very different and challenging term for you as parents and your children, as a result you deserve great thanks for all you are doing. Please can I take this opportunity to pay tribute to the tremendous work that all the staff at St Aloysius have carried out. As you can imagine it has been very challenging at times but I know that staff have appreciated the support that you as parents have given them.

You may have seen in the media that some schools will be closed to students on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> December 2020 and have a training day instead. As you will know from earlier correspondence we decided not to do this because we felt it was not helpful to you with late notice of any change. To confirm, school will be open as normal on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> December. This day will be our Christmas celebration day which means the children can wear their Christmas jumpers or party clothes. I hope you have enjoyed our Christmas video of the Nativity. Thank you to the staff for pulling it together. It has been posted on our website, YouTube channel and Facebook page. Thanks for your lovely comments about it.

### **Changes to isolation period**

As you may have seen in the media, on Friday 11th December it was announced that the isolation period for close contacts of confirmed Covid-19 cases is to reduce from 14 to 10 days. Schools in South Tyneside have been issued with the following guidance from Public Health:

- Any close contacts identified from Monday 14th December onwards will only have to complete 10 days of self-isolation
- This guidance will be able to be applied for people retrospectively

This means that for the children and staff in Y1PS, who are currently self isolating due to a confirmed case in school, can now come out of isolation sooner than initially advised. Their isolation will now end on 20th December. Unfortunately this means that they will still not return to school before the holiday but it means they can enjoy time out of isolation before Christmas.

Public Health have updated guidance for school age children who test positive over the Christmas holiday. As part of the guidance update, we have been asked to ensure that parents and carers are aware of the following information and relevant arrangements regarding positive cases in the holidays:

- Where a pupil tests positive for Covid, having developed symptoms **more than 48 hours since being in school**, the school should not be contacted. Parents and carers should follow contact tracing instructions provided by NHS Test and Trace.
- For the first 6 days after teaching ends, if a pupil tests positive for Covid having developed symptoms **within 48 hours of being in school**, the school is asked to assist

in identifying close contacts and advising self isolation, as the individual may have been infectious whilst in school.

If your child develops symptoms **within 48 hours of being in school** please notify school via [familysupport@st-alloysius.co.uk](mailto:familysupport@st-alloysius.co.uk)

### **Farewell**

Friday is Mr Stephen Page and Mrs Jayne Coleman's final day with us. Both staff have been with us for approximately a year. Pupils and staff will miss them greatly. They will miss their compassion, sense of humour and support. Stephen joined our school as an apprentice administration assistant and it has been a joy to see his rapidly growing confidence throughout his training year. He has a wonderful, calm manner in his dealing with pupils, staff and parents. He will thrive as he moves onto his next challenge. Jayne is also leaving us on Friday. She has been coming into school for many years as a voluntary teaching assistant before progressing onto a teaching assistant position whilst a member of staff was on maternity leave. She has been an utter joy to work this in her roles within the Y1 and Nursery class. I know the staff will miss her greatly.

### **After School Club**

For this week only, we have altered the timings for After School Club. It will close at 5.30pm promptly each evening.

### **Christmas Services at St Aloysius**

You are very welcome to attend the parish services over the coming days. I know Fr Simon and Rev Peter Jones will give you a very warm welcome. Please be aware that due to the current restrictions there are changes to typical arrangements.

- Please don't come if you have a temperature or the other symptoms of coronavirus.
- When Fr Simon is receiving Holy Communion he will say loudly **The Body of Christ** we will say together **Amen**. So that when we receive communion we will say nothing.
- Once we have received communion we must leave church.
- If you want to talk to someone you must do it in the car park, keeping social distances. Due to Government ruling masks **MUST** be worn at all Church Services/Masses. The times of the services are as follows:

### **CHRISTMAS MASSES**

- Christmas Eve - Vigil at St Aloysius 5pm (**no spaces available - list is full**)
- **Vigil at St James 6.30pm**
- **Midnight Mass at St Aloysius 11.30pm**
- **Christmas Morning at St Aloysius 10am**

Due to the COVID restrictions in Church for numbers etc. You will be able to book your place in Church by phoning (**07594918476**). There are a limited number of places in Churches and there will be an extra Mass to try to accommodate everyone.

### **Finally...**

I know lots of our children will be receiving electronic, internet ready gifts or smart devices at Christmas. Please help them to embrace the opportunities of our internet world by checking what they are doing online, who they are communicating with and how they are communicating with them. There are a variety of fantastic online support resources for parents. I've put a link underneath for the NSPCC which I strongly recommend that you read.

[www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/)

Enjoy your Christmas break. It is a real privilege to work at St Aloysius. The staff are very hardworking, talented and caring, and your children are a delight. I look forward to seeing you again on Monday 4th January.

Yours sincerely



