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Our Lady Immaculate Catholic Academies Trust Ltd: 09436283  
Diocese of Northampton

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Dear Parent / Guardian,

I hope you and your families are keeping safe and well and I hope you managed to have as enjoyable an Easter as was possible in these highly unusual circumstances.

As we begin this new term it is clear that schools will remain closed for some time to come. You may have seen the Secretary of State for education, Gavin Williamson, leading the Prime Minister's briefing last night. He said:

*"People are anxious to know when we are going to relax restrictions and when schools are likely to be fully back and open again. Of course, I want nothing more than to get schools back to normal, make sure that children are sat around learning and experiencing the joy of being at school. But I can't give you a date, because before we do, we need to meet five tests:*

- *First, we must protect the NHS's ability to cope and be sure that it can continue to provide critical care and specialist treatment right across the whole of the UK.*
- *Second, we need to see the daily death rates from coronavirus coming down.*
- *Third, we need to have reliable data that shows the rate of infection is decreasing to manageable levels.*
- *Fourth, we need to be confident that testing capacity and PPE are being managed, with supply able to meet not just today's demand, but future demand.*
- *And, fifth, and perhaps most crucially, we need to be confident any changes we do make will not risk a second peak of infections."*

With this in mind, our staff will continue to be setting work using the Firefly platform and, as you know, this also provides a means for students and teachers to communicate with one another. The students have been making excellent use of this facility and, as of this morning, an astonishing 700,000 visits to our Firefly have been recorded since the lockdown was implemented.

This week the BBC is launching its own education package as part of their Charter across TV and online; helping to keep children learning and supporting parents. You can find more information about this here: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zn9447h> . I encourage you to look at this and to direct your child to this, I have heard that some of the content is excellent.

I would also like to share with you some of the contributions we have made to the fight against this deadly virus. I must say a huge thank you to Mr Prudden for the magnificent work he has done in producing masks for healthcare workers. Mr Prudden explained on Friday:

'In total week ending 17/04/20, 104 units have been made & 60 delivered to the Ambulance service. I am planning to have another 100 completed by Tuesday morning with parts cut for another 225 units completed before the end of the week. Production is now ramping up with all the processes now established.'



This is great work and represents the very best of what we are and stand for as a community at St Thomas More.

I must also give a huge thank you to Mrs Oppong and Mrs Gmajner who came in and sorted out PPE to be donated from the science department. They gave over 300 goggles and over 500 pairs of gloves; again representing the very best of our community.

As we all know the lockdown is having a very real impact on people's jobs and incomes. It may be the case that some people are now entitled to Free School Meals who were not on the list prior to the coronavirus crisis. Those families who are entitled to free school meals are now receiving vouchers instead. If you believe that your child may now be entitled to free school meals, please follow this link to register: <https://www.bedford.gov.uk/schools-education-and-childcare/education-welfare-service/free-school-meals/>

All teachers will continue to be mindful, when setting work, that circumstances at home may be difficult and I ask that you bear in mind that teachers also may be struggling. Do please continue to keep us up to date with any news and if anyone falls ill, let the school know so that teachers can be advised of the situation.

Thank you for your continued support.

God bless,

Martin Bonner  
**Head Teacher**