



# St Mary's and St John's CE School

*"With God, all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26)*

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*Wisdom Service Hope*

Principal: Martin Serrão BA, MEd (Camb)

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Dear Parents and Carers,

## Visiting Students

As you know we have welcomed visiting students from Taiwan, Spain and China at various points over the last two years. These visits are designed to broaden the knowledge and understanding of our students (and our visitors) about different cultures and education systems in other countries. In the case of the visiting Spanish students there was an additional advantage in that they were deliberately paired with our GCSE Spanish students to help our students build and practise their language skills.

We want our students to experience different views and learn about other societies as we believe this will help them to see themselves as citizens of the world, more able to take advantage of the potential opportunities that the future may hold for them. This aim is embodied in one of our core Christian values that 'We strive to equip our students with the ability to make wise judgements, to grow in their understanding and awareness of the world around us and of God.'

That said, we are aware of the concerns regarding the Coronavirus and of reports in the news that may be causing some alarm. The students visiting us this week are from Taiwan and have been in the UK since 19th January 2020. Prior to the Taiwanese students arrival we considered the situation carefully and took advice from the local authority. The latest news reports 106 deaths, mainly in the Hubei province in China. So far there have been 47 reported cases (with no fatalities) outside China and 5 of these cases have been reported in Taiwan. Therefore, with the students visiting us having already been in the UK for a week, presenting as fit and well with no symptoms of illness, we judged that the visit could go ahead.

We were also due to have visiting students from China this half term but given the substantially higher number of cases in that country and the new recommendation from the Foreign Office advising against all but essential travel to China, we have decided to cancel that visit.

Our thoughts and prayers are with all those affected by this virus.

Yours faithfully,

Mrs. S Pittaway  
Acting Head of Secondary, Designated Safeguarding Lead