



Dear Parent/Guardian – 20th March.

Coronavirus Update

You will be aware that on Wednesday 18th March the Prime Minister announced plans for schools to close at the end of the day on Friday 20th March 2020.

Update on Provision for Children of Critical Workers and most vulnerable children

As you are now already aware, the Government is asking schools and colleges to remain open, where they can to provide care for a limited number of children: children who are vulnerable and children whose parents are critical to the Covid-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home. Further guidance was published late last night; the full guidance is at the link below and I would ask that you read this:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers>

It is becoming clear that we may be asked to care for children from other schools that have said that they will not be able to open. Clearly, in this situation we are having to plan in very short timeframes. I will continue to update you via the website and some updates may need to come to you over the weekend.

If you think you fall within the critical categories listed, then either you will have already confirmed this with us through the questionnaire we have already sent out or you should do so by 1pm today (20th March) by contacting the school and speaking to Mr. Lee Parfitt or Mr. Matthew Boyle. You should check with your employer that, based on their business continuity arrangements, your specific role is necessary for the continuation of the essential public service they are providing.

If you have already indicated that your child needs to attend from Monday but this is not now necessary, then please tell us by contacting the above members of staff.

Please follow these key principles:

1. If it is at all possible for your child to be at home, then they should be.
2. If a child needs specialist support, is vulnerable or has a parent who is a critical worker, then educational provision will be available for them.
3. Parents should not rely for childcare upon those who are advised to be in the stringent social distancing category such as grandparents, friends, or family members with underlying conditions.
4. Parents should also do everything they can to ensure children are not mixing socially in a way which can continue to spread the virus. They should observe the same social distancing principles as adults.

Thank you for the information you have provided for us to enable us to begin to plan for continued provision for the children of key workers and for vulnerable children. Letters will be going to those already confirmed today by last post. If your situation changes please do keep us informed and we shall do our very best to give you sound and honest advice which is steered via the Government. We have, and will continue to, provide open lines of communication.

Friday 20th March

We will remain open to all students tomorrow. Everyone is working hard to provide safe and suitable provision at this time and I am sure you will appreciate that we are also coping with significant staff absence. Your support has been appreciated and we have been humbled by your emails and phone calls of encouragement.

Distance Learning

From Monday, the vast majority of our students will be learning from home. This is clearly going to look different to a normal school day and we hope, if you are able, that your plans include family time, exercise and relaxation. We have already issued guidance on our plans for home learning and please do utilise them for they are extremely well structured. If you have mislaid the letter or information please do call the school and we shall email you a copy.

Support for Students who are entitled to Free School Meals

As per my previous communication, we have been working with our catering team and suppliers to ensure we can provide for students who are entitled to Free School Meals. We have made contact with all families this affects and essential supplies have either been collected from the Academy or are being delivered today to our identified families. We are looking at how we can keep on supporting our families over a longer closure period and this will be in the form of e-vouchers which will be text or emailed to your phone. The Government are constructing that system as a matter of urgency. As soon as I have anything confirmed I will contact those families directly.

Examinations for Students in Year 11 and Year 13

Students in Year 11 and Year 13 are, understandably, upset and anxious about the announcements made last night regarding examinations. The Prime Minister has confirmed that exams due to be taken in May / June will now not take place. This affects all GCSE, Btec and A Level exams.

In this time of uncertainty, we have ensured that all Year 11 and Year 13 students have been spoken to today and given a consistent message. I have included this information below so that you can continue to support your children at home.



Students need to continue to prepare for whatever the situation is going to be. At this stage we know that exams will not be taken in May and June but we don't know any more. We will let students know as soon as we know more.

It is important to keep control of the 'controllables'. Students cannot control the decisions happening nationally but they can take control of their own actions. At this stage, and until we know more, this includes continuing with any coursework and learning.

As a school we are very well set up to provide predicted grades should this be required. We have not been asked for this yet but we are ready for this eventuality.

*The last five / seven years have been productive - students have learnt a lot. We understand how disappointed students and parents may be, but want to remind everyone that it is the **learning** that is important.*

We will, of course, keep everyone updated as soon as we know more. Whilst we await this information, please can I kindly ask that you refrain from contacting us with individual queries about your child's predictions as we will not be able to provide any further information.

Thank you once again and I am really proud of how our pupils, your children, have demonstrated such strength and resilience. They are a credit to you and please congratulate them. It is together that we shall succeed. I wish you nothing but good health and stay safe, stay positive.

Yours sincerely

Darren Turner
Executive Principal.