

20th March 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

As you know, following the announcement by the Prime Minister on Wednesday 18th March, all schools are closing from the end of the school day on Friday 20th March.

Last night guidance was issued by government and it states that *the most recent scientific advice on how to further limit the spread of COVID-19 is clear. If children can stay safely at home, they should, to limit the chance of the virus spreading.* They have set out 5 key principles:

- 1. If it is at all possible for children 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.
5. Residential special schools, boarding schools and special settings continue to care for children wherever possible.

I appreciate that for many parents, the closure of your school will make life even more difficult for you during what I know are extraordinarily challenging times. We are acutely aware of this and that many of you will want to continue to work if you can.

Schools have been asked to prioritise an education provision for vulnerable pupils, if your child falls into this category you will receive a separate personal letter shortly.

If your work is critical to the COVID-19 response, or you work in one of the critical sectors listed below, and you cannot keep your child safe at home then your children will be prioritised for education provision:

- Health and social care
- Education of childcare
- Key public services
- Local or National Government
- Food and other necessary goods
- Public safety and national security
- Transport
- Utilities, communication and financial services



If workers think they fall within the critical categories above **they should confirm with their employer that**, based on their business continuity arrangements, their specific role is necessary for the continuation of this essential public service. A letter to this effect will be required to admit your child into school and we will require 24 hours' notice to ensure we have adequate staffing levels to keep all children safe whilst in our care. (Please note that for emergency services, education and government workers photographic ID will be accepted)

Staff will aim to provide as complete an education for students through this period but the Government has also been clear that we will not be expected to provide more than care and supervision if, because of staff absence, we are not able to. I hope you can understand that. We will, of course, continue to do our very best for you and your children.

The school day will be from 8.30am-2.45pm and students will need to adhere to the following:

- Maintain the school's behaviour policy.
- Wear normal school uniform.
- Complete the work set so that they can continue their learning during this time.

We are working with the school caterer to enable meals to be available for students during the school day.

If you believe your child is eligible to attend school from Monday, please complete the form below, including proof of eligibility, and return to the school office or email by 3pm today.

For all other students the school is closed and we will provide support with distance learning on Show My homework, Office 365 (student emails) and Microsoft Teams. All usernames and passwords to access these online platforms have been posted to parents. For those families that do not have access to our online provision, paper work packs will be available from the Main Reception at 9am on Monday 23rd March.

Further details of how students will be supported in their learning whilst the school remains closed will be sent out in due course.

I realise this is a very challenging time for everyone and appreciate your continued support – we are only able to continue to operate because of your ongoing co-operation and help, and I am very proud of the way everyone is rallying around. I would also like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to our staff who have shown, and continue to show, remarkable fortitude and commitment.

Yours sincerely

Simon Smith
Principal