

Monday March 16th 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

We continue to live in very uncertain times and I appreciate there is a great deal of anxiety among many sections of the population – not least those who are preparing for examinations this summer. We continue to monitor the situation and receive a daily update from the Department for Education which is the source of advice for us. Currently the advice is to continue in school and prepare for exams as normal and there is clearly benefit for young people in giving them a sense of normality. On Friday the statement was ‘Current advice remains in place: no education or children’s social care setting should close in response to a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 case unless advised to do so by Public Health England. The Chief Medical Officer has advised that the impact of closing schools on both children’s education and on the workforce will be substantial, but the benefit to public health may not be. Decisions on future advice to schools will be taken based on the latest and best scientific evidence, which at this stage suggests children are a lower risk group.’

Hygiene

Frequent and proper handwashing remain the most important way to prevent spread of the virus and students and staff are encouraged to wash their hands regularly. We do currently have sufficient supplies of soap, hand gel and toilet roll. If you are visiting the school please use the hand gel at reception.

Attendance:

All students should attend school as normal and not be kept off with regard to Coronavirus unless they show symptoms of a high temperature (37.8 degrees and above) and/or have a new continuous cough. DfE guidance states:

- staff, young people and children should stay at home if they are unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature to avoid spreading infection to others. Otherwise they should attend education or work as normal
- if staff, young people or children become unwell on site with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature they should be sent home

School Trips

Government advice currently is that there should be no international trips. Discussions are currently taking place with travel companies and insurance companies nationally and more specific guidance will hopefully follow as there is currently no end date for the advice. Our next foreign trip is not due to take place until the end of May and as soon as we receive specific advice regarding that I will communicate with parents and students concerned.

There is no ban on domestic trips and these will be reviewed as we go along. Risk assessments for hygiene on any trips will be updated.

Currently insurance will only be available for cancellation if there is specific advice that trips are not allowed.

Contingency planning

- As a school leadership team we are meeting daily to review the advice. We surveyed the entire school on Friday to update our information as to who has access to the internet and a computer at home. If the Government announces school closure at any point or if there is need for partial closure due to staff shortage,

we will provide work each day on Show My Homework and make work packs available for those students who do not have internet/computer access at home. All faculties are in the process of preparing such work in case it is needed and it would be expected that students follow normal learning hours at home. I would ask you to reinforce this with your sons and daughters.

- Year 11 remain a priority and staff are working to ensure that all content in the exam specifications is completed as soon as possible. The Exam Boards currently have issued no advice to schools beyond carry on as normal.
- We have taken the decision to cancel additional meetings and so the Year 11 Maths, English and Science Parents Evening on April 2nd will not take place. Any Year 8 options meetings which still need to be completed will be done by phone.
- If you have recently changed any contact information and not informed school yet could I ask you to do so as a matter of urgency

We will continue to focus on learning but take immediate account of advice as we receive it. These are unprecedented times as we can see from the news daily and any national decisions will have an impact on all of us. I can only ask that you respect the decisions made either by Government or subsequently by the school.

Yours

Andrew Waller
Headteacher