



School Newsletter

With Christ we live, we love, we learn and we grow

18.03.20

Dear Parents and Carers,

COVID-19 Coronavirus Update – School Closure – Friday 20th March 2020

I am sure that you will have heard the news tonight about the closure of schools from the end of the day on Friday.

I have taken the following from the BBC website because I thought would be useful as a summary of what we know so far. I have added my own notes in blue

Schools across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are to close on Friday because of the coronavirus epidemic.

What will the impact be?

How long are schools likely to be closed?

*We don't yet know. This will depend to a large extent on how effective measures to reduce the spread of the outbreak are. **Some experts have said that the closure could go until the summer maybe even until September – but in reality no one knows for sure.***

Deputy Chief Medical Officer Jenny Harries said the move was not prompted because children were at any particular risk, but because it was necessary to reduce social contact throughout society.

England's Education Secretary Gavin Williamson says schools will be closed "until further notice."

*Most schools were due to break up for the Easter holidays in two weeks' time. **That is when St Mary's Easter Holidays starts.***

Schools in England, Wales and Scotland will close on Friday afternoon.

So will every school be completely closed?

No. Some schools will be kept open with a skeleton staff to provide support for the children of key workers, such as NHS staff, police and delivery drivers. There are a few unknowns and a few questions around this for us.

We do not know the details of this plan yet.

We need to find out what is meant by 'key worker,' A full list of key worker categories will be published by the Cabinet Office tomorrow.

Who are those parents are in our school and do wish their children to attend?

We need to know, for certain, which staff are available.

It might be that groups of schools decide to cluster together to provide care on one site, a central hub but until we get more information we do not know.

They will also be asked to help those most in need - for example, children who receive free school meals.

We are looking at ways in which this can be achieved in school; we have already spoken with the kitchen staff about this. The government has also indicated it could provide vouchers.

What will happen about exams?

In England, all exams in May and June have been cancelled, including GCSEs, A-levels and primary school national curriculum tests known as SATs. There will be no EYFS assessments, Year 1 phonics screening check, Year 2 KS1 tests nor Year 6 KS2 SATs.

What about the children unable to attend school?

We have been thinking about an eventuality such as this for a couple of weeks. Next week class teachers will be planning and providing learning activities for those children not able to attend school. We will provide you with details of this in due course.

I think we all have to let the news sink in and take it one-step at a time.

Best wishes,

Patrick Smyth, Headteacher.