



Our ref: MME
Date: 13th March 2020

Dear parent or carer,

This is a lengthy letter but as you will see it is necessary to provide you with some key pieces of information for the days ahead.

Public Health England advice

We have been following closely the general advice for the public and specific advice for schools. As you will be aware the Government's advice altered yesterday so that any person with a temperature and or a new, continuous cough (however mild) should self-isolate for a period of seven days. If your symptoms persist or worsen, you should contact the NHS on 111. You do not need to have a diagnosis to self-isolate. Further advice on this change is available via this link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-people-with-confirmed-or-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

It is important that all members of our school community follow this advice.

Our plans for a possible enforced closure

We have been planning for the coronavirus issue for several weeks in advance of any possible enforced school closure and I am now in a position to let you know what those plans are. We want to ensure that we are able to provide support for all of our students (particularly those with exams in the summer) should the school be required to close.

The system

We will use the Google Classroom system to upload work and guidance for the students to complete. We will ensure that answers are provided so that the students can check if they have successfully completed the work. Students will be required to take their exercise books home and bring them into school each day from now on so that if we are instructed to close swiftly, the students have their books to work in at home.

How it will operate

The evening before a lesson takes place, staff will upload the work and advice for the students. Even though the school would be closed, we expect all students to follow the normal timings of their lessons and their normal timetable which you will find in the back of their planner.

Period 1 – 8.50 – 9.50am
Period 2 – 9.50 – 10.50am
Period 3 – 11.10am – 12.10pm
Period 4 – 12.10 – 1.05pm
Period 5 – 1.40 – 2.40pm

We recommend that students stick to these timings as best they can as it will help to ensure some structure during what would be an unusual time for us all.



Students should not print off the material but should work from the screen and write in their exercise books or on a piece of paper. Staff will upload answers for the students and students will be expected to mark their own work as would normally happen in a lesson.

In addition to the work set by staff, if students want further advice the BBC Bitesize website is a good source of revision material for Year 7 -11 students and it also allows students to test themselves.
Feedback from staff

Staff will not be able to see the work the students are doing or provide the verbal feedback that we normally would be able to in a regular lesson. In addition many of our staff have young children and if schools/nurseries are closed they will have to look after their own children during the day. As a result the feedback to students will not be consistent across all classes as it will depend on individual staff's personal circumstances. However we will ensure that all students do receive whole class feedback from their teachers in line with our marking policy which is every three weeks (should we be closed for this length of time or longer).

Year 11 and 13

In addition to the system for other students, we are planning on providing short video lessons to support those students in Years 11 and 13 who have exams this summer.

We have developed a system which will allow staff (who are fit and well but at home) to continue to provide instruction and work for our Year 11 and 13 students. Staff will upload short videos for the students' lessons, the students are expected to watch the videos and then attempt the work which has been set for them. The students will also be set work using our Google Classroom system.

We have been testing this system throughout this week and whilst the system has potential, it is not ideal due to the reliance on staff's own home Wifi systems. The upload speeds vary dramatically and this has meant that it may not be possible for all staff to upload videos. Staff have been testing the system with Year 11 students this week and we will continue to test it over the coming days.

Cover for staff

If a member of staff is unable to provide work for their students because they are ill, our system allows other staff within the department to step in and upload material for the class to ensure the students can continue working.

Communication

Students can message staff directly via Google Classroom and staff will do their best to reply. However students should not expect immediate replies as this will depend on staff's own personal circumstances (particularly if they are looking after their own young children). If teachers need to contact parents this will be done via comments on Classcharts.

Although our school office would be closed we will ensure that staff monitor our 'contact us' email in case parents have any urgent matters they would like to make us aware of. Details of this email address are at the top of this letter.

In addition to this I am planning on keeping you updated on the position as appropriate via the Parentmail system.



Conclusion

Our plans should ensure that if there is an enforced closure of the school, we can continue to provide our students with the best support we can in such highly unusual circumstances.

We are clearly in uncharted waters at this point. I would like thank all parents for ensuring that the atmosphere and attitude of the students in the school has been calm despite the exceptional situation.

Yours sincerely,

**Mr M McKelvie
Principal**