



21 April 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

Re: Update 21 April 2020 Covid-19

I am writing to give you an update on what has been taking place in school and what we are planning to do going forwards, especially following the statement, over the weekend made by Gavin Williamson, Secretary of State for Education and the most recent update from the Department for Education (DfE), link below and extract:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-school-closures/guidance-for-schools-about-temporarily-closing>

"Schools will remain closed until further notice, except for children of critical workers and vulnerable children who are encouraged to attend where it is appropriate for them to do so. We will only re-open schools when the scientific advice indicates it is safe to do so and will consult closely with the sector on our approach.

It is important to underline that schools, all childcare settings (including early years settings, childminders and providers of childcare for school-age children), colleges and other educational establishments, remain safe places for children. Reducing the number of children making the journey to school, and reducing the number of children in educational settings, will protect the NHS and save lives by reducing the risks of spreading the virus.

Schools, and all childcare providers, are therefore being asked to continue to provide care for a limited number of children - children who are vulnerable, and children whose parents are critical to the coronavirus (COVID-19) response."

Keeping school open within the strict guidelines from the DfE

Since the closure of schools on 20 March 2020, we have remained open for children of critical workers, vulnerable children and to support parents/carers of children with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP). The challenge for all school settings is to enforce social distancing and provide an educational experience for pupils who have a range of learning needs. As I have previously mentioned in my letters, I have been overwhelmed by the response of support from our members of staff and their willingness to help and support in whatever way they can whether it be to provide educational experience in school, deliver food parcels, organise food vouchers and laptops to support our pupils at home or make telephone contact to ensure whilst in isolation, no one feels isolated. However, a significant number of members of staff are within the key groups identified as needing to be shielded from Covid-19 and however much they are keen to physically help in school, for their own health and wellbeing they are not allowed to do so.

Over the two-week Easter break we had a significantly reduced number of pupils in school and from yesterday this number has increased; from notifications we have received from Social Workers, parents and carers we envisage the number of pupils attending TSS to increase a little further over the next week. With low numbers of pupils in attendance, we have been able to provide a range of activities in school including sport such as badminton, catch tennis and passing skills with a football as well as the occasional online exercise session and yoga. As pupil numbers increase, we are having to create additional class groups which means separate classrooms to ensure there is adequate social distance between pupils. For a number



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of pupils, the need to sit separately and not be able to interact in a way they have done before is a challenge for them and is likely to become more of a challenge as we need to continue to enforce social distancing. The range of activities going forwards are more likely to be classroom based, independent study but we intend to maintain elements of creativity and practical work wherever possible.

Whilst school has remained open, we have ensured that we follow the strict guidelines on social distancing and ensuring pupils wash their hands on a regular basis following DfE guidelines – link and extract below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-social-distancing-in-education-and-childcare-settings>

“To help ensure that the risk of virus spread for both staff and children is as low as possible, education and childcare settings that remain open should:

- tell children, parents, carers or any visitors, such as suppliers, not to enter the education or childcare setting if they are displaying any symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19)
- consider how children arrive at the education or childcare setting, and reduce any unnecessary travel on coaches, buses or public transport
- ensure class sizes reflect the numbers of teaching staff available and are kept as small as possible
- stagger lunch times, break times, and the movement of pupils around the school, to reduce large groups of children gathering
- discourage parents from gathering at school gates
- try to follow the [social distancing guidelines](#)”

Our catering team have continued to provide lunches for all pupils in school and will continue to do so although some pupils continue as they have before, to bring a packed lunch from home. Although pupils can go for lunch at the same time due to the low number of pupils, we do ensure that there are social-distancing measures in place whilst waiting to be served lunch.

Education at home

The announcement by Gavin Williamson outlined support that has been put in place to support education at home and we have today received guidance from the DfE on the launch of the Oak National Academy - <https://www.thenational.academy/> which is a national online educational resource. We are in the process of creating a link on our school website for ease of access alongside Teams and Remote Access. As I have written previously, we remain in contact with our Year 10 and Year 12 pupils to ensure they continue to focus on their studies as best they can. This new national resource alongside BBC Bitesize provides support for pupils in a range of subjects in Years 7 to 10. The Government also recently announced support for technology at home:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/get-help-with-technology-for-remote-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

“Digital devices for disadvantaged and vulnerable children

Local authorities, trusts and other relevant organisations overseeing schools will be given guidance on how to place online orders for devices for eligible pupils from Wednesday 22 April. Schools, parents and pupils will not be able to order the devices themselves.

Digital devices for care leavers and children with social workers will be given to local authorities, who will manage distribution to children and young people. Schools may be asked to help manage distribution where appropriate.

We'll update this page closer to that date with the web address for placing orders as well as more information about what is included and how to apply.”

We first began providing support over four weeks ago, with home learning through the provision of laptops, not just for disadvantaged and vulnerable but for our pupils who find accessing online resources a challenge when family demands are great on a limited number of devices. Once we are made aware of the arrangements to access the digital resources I will write again. I am aware that several subjects and members of staff remain in contact through Teams and once again I wish to stress that if deadlines cannot be met then this will not be a problem on return to school. We want to ensure pupils and their families feel supported and focused on learning as best we all can at this time. I am aware that Ofqual are in the process of consulting on the impact of Covid-19 for examinations for Year 10 pupils and again, as soon as I have clarity of their proposal I will write to all Year 10 pupils and their parents/carers to update them on the guidance.

As I have previously written, if any parent/carer has any concerns and who does not already have a contact with someone in school, please contact the school on:

enquiries@titussaltschool.co.uk

As I receive any further information, I will keep you updated. Once again, many thanks for your continued support.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ian Morrel', written in a cursive style.

Ian Morrel

Headteacher