



23 March 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

Re: Covid-19 update 23 March 2020

I wish to thank parents and carers for their continued support especially in helping with keeping their children safely at home to help reduce the risk of spreading the Covid-19 coronavirus. I write to give you an update following the decision that was made nationally to close schools to help prevent the spread of the Covid-19 Coronavirus.

Our communications systems were set up to provide the following:

1. A letter to all parents and carers to give a daily update on national advice and guidance and how this impacts our school
2. Direct contact with parents and carers of pupils in receipt of free school meals
3. Direct contact with parents whose household has both parents and carers on the list of critical workers
4. Direct contact with parents and carers who are finding difficulty in accessing our learning platform through Teams

In addition, we have established a protocol for making regular contact with parents and carers of pupils who are regarded as vulnerable, especially our pupils who are Looked After.

As we opened school this morning, I received significant support from our members of staff; this has enabled me to produce a rota of teaching staff and support staff to work with the very small number of pupils in school. The system we have set up is allowing pupils to work in one of our IT rooms and for the pupils in our Designated Specialist Provision sit as far apart as is possible, produce work by accessing Teams as well as have break and lunch time following the established times of the school day. Today we made lunch pack deliveries to support pupils and their families and our catering team, Innovate, have ordered ingredients and food to make five-day food hampers. The on-site Facilities Management Team, AMEY, are beginning the process of systematically deep cleaning the school, starting with Café Cosmopolitan our large dining area.

Parents and carers may find information at the following link helpful:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers>

Re: Work on Teams

I appreciate that you may have found that access to Teams was interrupted this morning, we are aware that large numbers of users are accessing Teams nationally and this had some impact. We have set up Teams with work in two-week blocks, not as a daily or timetabled lesson basis. We set it up in this way to allow pupils and their families to access the online content at a time that is convenient and workable for a household. The use of Teams allows use of the Microsoft Office suite of applications even if you do not have them on your system – they can be accessed as a free download using a pupil's school email and password.

Re: Examinations

You will be aware that examinations have been cancelled for this summer's examination series. I am sure you will have many questions and concerns; below is a link to information produced by Ofqual and the Department for Education:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/update-following-announcement-on-exams-and-grades>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-cancellation-of-gcses-as-and-a-levels-in-2020>

I appreciate that even after reading the advice and guidance some parents, carers and pupils will still have concerns. As I wrote previously, we will ensure that our assessments are as accurate as they possibly can be. However, as the advice states, the grades awarded this year will be a "calculated grade". The information to date states that this will be a combination of points of reference including teacher assessment, mock exams, school profile and the national distribution of grades. The advice and guidance states that there will be the option for pupils to appeal against their calculated grades and to be able to sit an examination if they choose to do so when the system is in place to be able to do this. As a school we want to ensure our pupils are able to successfully make the next step in their education and career pathway. I asked our members of staff to begin to make assessments of pupils' work and award a Realistic Expected Grade for each pupil in each of their subjects; this will be our starting point which we will submit to the DfE and Ofqual when required.

It is important that pupils continue to work at home and retain their work as this may be required as proof of standard attained. Friday was a very sad day as our Year 11 and Year 13 pupils had their last day in school without it being their planned last day – a number of pupils I spoke with said they were unable to express how they felt. This point it is not an end but an interruption; I have no doubt that paths will cross with our school in one way or another at some point in the future. As the situation changes, we hope to be able to have Results Days and celebrate the achievements of our pupils and we will look forward to seeing you again and for you to share your experiences with us.

As I receive more information, I will update all parents and carers, so you are aware of the impact the current situation is having on all areas of the school. Once again, many thanks for your continued support and to those parents and carers who have written in to express their support and appreciation.

Yours sincerely



Ian Morrel
Headteacher