



You asked us some really important questions, I am sure there will be many more but I hope the answers to the questions below help to provide reassurance at a challenging time for us all.

My child has been absent from school will I get the resources you have provided for them?

If your child is absent from school between now and Monday we will post resources or you can collect them from school if you are able to do so, just let us know and we can arrange this for you.

When are you closing:

We will be closed from Monday 23rd March until further notice. Families should prepare for an extended closure. Letters & resource packs are going home with all students Thursday.

Will you be open for keyworkers families / vulnerable families?

Over the next 24 hours we will be meeting with the LA and other schools to put together a coordinated plan to respond to this directive from the Government. This is a highly complex provision but we will communicate a plan by the weekend so that you know what is happening and who for. You can help us by letting us know if you are a frontline keyworker by emailing or contacting the admin team at school by 12pm tomorrow.

My child has free school meals is there any support?

We took the decision last week to purchase gift vouchers from Morison's to cover the FSM entitlement for the initial period of closure. We understand the Government is going to provide a voucher scheme for you moving forward. In spite of this I have made the decision that we will give you £50 vouchers for each child who receives FSM allowance *regardless* of any support from the Government. We hope that the immediacy of these vouchers will help you at a tough time and support in the interim whilst the Government puts support plans in place. Simply, it was just the right thing to do. Vouchers will be posted out to you Friday.

My child has an EHCP / is in your Resource Provision what help will they be getting?

All our EHCP and Resource Provision / vulnerable SEND students have been appointed a keyworker from within our learning support team who will keep in touch with you throughout the closure period. Further support will be communicated shortly regarding any other provision at this time.

I am a carer for a looked after child, what support will I get?

All our looked after and vulnerable students who receive social care support will have an identified key worker who will keep in contact with carers and social care. Further information will be communicated shortly regarding any other provision at this time.

Who do I contact if there is a safeguarding concern or if I need some advice?

We will be sending all students home with a 'closure' letter tomorrow which details all the learning resources and contacts you may need during the closure period.

Why should my children bother doing any home learning?

We need to prepare ourselves for the reality that this is unlikely to be a 'quick fix' closure. It is important that children retain structure as much as possible, this will help you and your children

manage a considerable amount of time in the household together. Whilst we do not expect students to be working for 5/6 hours on one go we would suggest that a structured 2/3 hours of work set in show my homework, reading, daily exercise becomes part of your routine. Staff will be setting work and checking on student engagement through the closure period. Please be aware they will also likely be looking after their own households / coping with potential illness during this period. As long as we work together in our expectations our home learning can be purposeful and beneficial.

What did they mean by 'no exams'?

Ok this is the big one, by 'no exams' we believe at this point this means there will not be an exam series this summer. It is possible that we will be asked to provide evidence of the grades students could have achieved had they sat the exams. We await clarity on this but please be assured any evidence based process will be carried out with integrity and professionalism. We will look at the full evidence range – if a child performed poorly in an isolated test this alone will not be the sole reason for a grade recommendation from the school. Taking the line from the Government I will do whatever it takes to ensure that student progress is correctly, accurately reported. We will communicate with you at every step of the way as we have done throughout this process.

Why should Yr11 bother learning anything else? Does it matter?

Great question and right now I can fully appreciate how disheartened many of you may be feeling. However, we need to think beyond the 'now' . We are in a difficult period now, but we will come through it and knowledge will always matter. Knowledge is your passport to successful post-16 future. Therefore my advice, based on common sense, is that it is important for you to continue building up your knowledge base in your current GCSE qualifications. It is likely that post-16 provisions will want to do some early baseline assessments when you begin courses to understand what you know and can do as this will help them understand what / how to teach you. It is possible that English/Maths qualifications could be sat in the autumn term – speculation yes, but in my view always better to be prepared. So in a nutshell I would continue to invest in learning and understanding key concepts, knowledge etc that will support your future qualifications. It is always better to be prepared – this also gives you some control back which at this point is pretty important.

What about the Prom?

At this stage it is too early to know how social distancing will affect the summer term, we will do everything we can to support this. If it becomes evident that we cannot continue with the Prom we may look to transfer the booking to a later date. But as ever we will communicate with you and agree what is best for all concerned. If it is taken out of our hands we will ensure you are refunded any ticket money.

Finally I have said to my staff and I will say to all of you that I/we do not have all the answers, we have not yet even thought of all the questions. However I do know this one incontrovertible truth and that is as a community, as school, as individuals and collectively I know we will find a way. We will meet this challenge head on, we will walk with courage, dignity and purpose and we **will** overcome. Thank you sincerely for your patience, your trust and your confidence in the staff and the leadership at this school – we've got this, together.

Regards

Heidi Thurland

Headteacher

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