

Headteacher: Miss Caitlin Macrae

19th March 2020

Dear Parents and carers,

I am writing to you to update you on the current situation. Due to levels of staff absence in school, we have had to make the very difficult decision to close the school to Year 13 students from tomorrow morning 20th March 2020, rather than keeping Year 13 students in school until Friday afternoon. This means that Year 13 students will now be working at home.

As you may know, The Prime Minister announced yesterday that GCE exams will not take place in May and June 2020 for Year 13 students. However, at the time of writing, we have not been given any clarification from the Department for Education or Ofqual about what that will mean for our Year 13 students. The statement we received last night, from Secretary of State for Education Gavin Williamson is:

'We can confirm that we will not go ahead with assessments or exams ... this academic year. We will work with the sector and Ofqual to ensure children get the qualifications they need. My Department is working closely with local authorities, representatives of early years, schools and head teachers, regional school commissioners and bodies such as Ofsted and Ofqual about how to deliver this change as effectively as possible.'

While this is good news with regards to the uncertainty about examination arrangements, we currently do not know what the announcement actually means for our Year 13 students in terms of their learning over the next weeks or months. It may mean, for example, that the qualifications and/or references, to take young people on to their next stage of education and employment, might be based on mock examination work, predicted grades, working at grades or another indicator that has yet to be confirmed. We just do not know at this time.

With this in mind, I am asking for your support, to ensure your child continues to learn as effectively as possible in the circumstances. The work that Year 13 students are set will continue to focus on learning and revision for their GCE subjects for the time being. Once we have confirmation of the Department for Education's plan, teachers will review and amend the work set.

- Students are expected to complete the work set for them through **Show My Homework** and to use their subject **ISPs**.
- Students will need internet access at home
- Students are encouraged to use any **other online learning platforms** available to them and **revise prior learning and content**, using the High Five revision strategies
- Students are expected to **submit their work as soon as they have completed it** to the teacher through Show My Homework or using their school email address, as directed
- Students are being encouraged to keep, as much as possible, **to a normal school routine, starting their school day at 8.25am and completing 5 lessons worth of work each day** to the best of their ability.
- Students will need **access to the equipment they need and a place to work**.
- Students are expected to **check their timetable each day** and plan the order of the work they will complete
- Students are encouraged to get **fresh air and exercise**, where possible
- Students are encouraged to **read as widely as possible**.
- Students will **check their school email daily** and respond promptly where required

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- Students will use their **school email address** to contact teachers if they need some help with any of the work set. The tutor and teachers will also contact students using school email, to give feedback or check on progress
- If there is no internet access at home, staff may get in touch with parents/ carers **by phone** where possible and appropriate, to discuss learning
- The School will monitor student access and usage of Show My Homework. We will contact parents and carers where students are not regularly accessing and submitting work set
- Students who are unwell are not expected to complete work during the time of illness

In addition to keeping up with learning, students are also expected to complete the following, as appropriate:

- **If applying for university** students need to have made their first choice and insurance choice by May 1st. Students should contact Mr Furness if they need further support
- The **student finance** talk has been cancelled, due to the current situation. However, students should apply for student finance as soon as possible by going to: www.gov.uk/student-finance
- If applying for **apprenticeships**, students have guidance from Mr Furness. Mr Furness will continue to send out apprenticeship offers to students' school email address. Students should contact Mr Furness if they need further support

Please find attached guidance for parents, carers and students in the event that your child has difficulty logging in to Show My Homework or the school email address. Also included in the guidance is how to get in touch, by school email, with staff.

Also attached is an overview of the online learning platforms that will be available for use by students of different year groups, for your information.

Please be aware that, unless directed otherwise by Public Health or the government, staff will be working (for example setting work for their classes and responding to email communication through school email addresses) either in school or remotely, during the school closure. However, if a member of staff is unwell, they will not be expected to continue their work while they are unwell. I would therefore ask for your support and patience with communication.

Please check regularly for school comms updates and updates on the school website regarding the school closure and plans to reopen.

For more information on the coronavirus please refer to the following links:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/coronavirus-covid-19-uk-government-response>

Thank you for your continued support of the school.

Yours sincerely

Miss Caitlin Macrae
Headteacher