

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 11 students from tomorrow morning 20th March 2020, rather than keeping Year 11 students in school until Friday afternoon. This means that your child will now be working at home. If you are a key, front line worker or your child has an EHCP (Education Health Care Plan) or has other specific needs, your child will return to school on Monday 23rd March 2020.

As you may know, The Prime Minister announced yesterday that GCSE exams will not take place in May and June 2020 for Year 11 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 11 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 11 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 your child is set will continue to focus on learning and revision for their GCSE subjects for the time being. Once we have confirmation of the Department for Education's plan, teachers will review and amend the work set.

- Your child is expected to complete the work set for them through **Show My Homework**. Your child will need internet access to access this work
- If your child does not have internet access at home, they will bring home paper copies of work to complete and will receive further work, where appropriate, through the post
- Your child will also be expected to complete a **minimum of 2 Bedrock sessions each week**. Please encourage them to do more than 2
- Please also encourage your child to use any **other online learning platforms** available to them and to **revise prior learning and content**, using the High Five revision strategies
- Your child should **submit their work** to the teacher through Show My Homework or using their school email address, as directed
- Please encourage your child to keep, as much as possible, **to a normal school routine and complete 5 lessons worth of work each day** to the best of their ability
- Please ensure your child has **access to basic writing equipment, paper and a place to work**

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- Please help your child **check their timetable each day**, to help them plan the order of the work they will complete
- Please encourage your child to get **fresh air and exercise**, where possible and to **read as widely as possible**
- Your child should use their **school email address** to contact teachers if required. Staff will also contact your child using school email, to give feedback or check on progress
- For those students without internet access at home, staff may get in touch with parents and carers **by phone** where possible and appropriate, to discuss your child's learning
- The School will monitor student access and usage of Show My Homework. If a student is not regularly accessing and submitting work set, the school will endeavour to contact parents and carers
- If your child is unwell, they are not expected to complete work during the time of illness

Please find attached guidance for parents, carers and students in the event that your child has difficulty logging in to Show My Homework, Bedrock 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.

If your child currently has a free school meal and is not ill or self-isolating, please send them into school to collect a meal to take away at the following times:

- 10.50 to 11.05am

If we become unable to continue to provide free school meals in school, we will let families affected know.

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