

Headteacher: Miss Caitlin Macrae

18<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

**Re: Coronavirus update – Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2020 9am**

**The school remains open** and we are continuing to do all that we can to minimise the risk to students and staff. We continue to follow all the advice from the Department for Education, Public Health and Herts County Council.

However, we are now in the position where we have a considerable amount of staff and student absence due to the government's staying at home and self-isolation advice. Earlier in the week, we managed to secure additional cover staff from our supply agencies, but despite our continued efforts to keep the school running as usual, we are now in a position where we have had to review our timetable and dining room arrangements.

**From today**, students may have some disruption to their usual timetables. This means that they may be taught by a different member of staff or need to join a different class for at least some of their lessons. Students will receive their revised timetable in tutor time this morning. We recommend that Year 11 and 13 students bring work to school for independent study in the event that their usual subject teacher is absent and they are in a lesson taught by a non-specialist subject teacher. We will be reviewing this timetable daily, in light of further student and/or staff absence in the coming days.

Also from today, students will not have the usual selection of food and drinks to purchase from the dining room. However, the dining room will still be open for free breakfast at the usual time. It will also remain open at break and lunchtimes. We will update you if we become unable to provide food and drinks in school over the coming days, due to dining room staff absence. In this case, we would ask you to provide a packed lunch for your child. If your child currently has a free school meal we will, of course, continue to provide food and drink for your child during the school day.

**Going forward**, it is very likely that it will be necessary to start the partial closure of the school so that we can safely teach and supervise students. We will inform you if and when this is the case, but wanted to explain how this may work so that you can plan ahead.

A partial closure will mean that we will ask you to keep your child at home from specific year groups in the following stages:

**Stage One:**

Year 9 students. It may be later this week that we have to ask you to keep your child at home, if they are in Year 9.

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### Stage Two:

Year 10 and Year 12 students. If necessary, we will have to ask you to keep your child at home if they are in Year 10 and Year 12. This may be later this week.

### Stage Three:

Year 7 and 8 students. If necessary, we will have to ask you to keep your child at home if they are in Year 7 and Year 8. This may be later this week.

### Stage Four:

Year 11 and Year 13 students. We will do everything we can to keep teaching these year groups for as long as possible, continuing to prepare them for their summer examinations. However, we may need to ask you to keep your child at home if they are in Year 11 and Year 13. This may be later this week.

**Please let me stress that we are not currently at the stage where we are asking any year groups to stay at home.** We will continue to provide a full education for as long as possible. However, I am sure you will appreciate that the situation this week has been fast moving, so this measure may become necessary this week.

The other possible scenario, in the event that staffing in school reduces significantly during a school day, is that we may need to send some or all year groups home early, rather than keeping them in school until the end of the school day. **If this becomes the case at any point, we will communicate with parents and carers through our usual school comms and ask Year 9 to 13 to go home. We will keep Year 7 and 8 at school until we have confirmation that you are happy for them to leave the school site.**

We understand that this may well be extremely inconvenient and disruptive for families but I am sure you understand that the current Covid 19 Coronavirus situation has forced many schools into these difficult circumstances. We cannot keep your children in school without a safe level of adult supervision. **If you work for the NHS**, and these arrangements will impact upon your ability to attend work, please contact the school on [admin@highfield.herts.sch.uk](mailto:admin@highfield.herts.sch.uk) to let us know. We will do all we can to keep your child in school, whichever year group they may be in.

Thank you for your continued support of the school.

Yours sincerely,

Caitlin Macrae  
Headteacher