



12th March 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

Further to our earlier emails, we are writing to provide more details on the school's approach to the coronavirus COVID-19 situation. This email is intended to update you on five key areas: student access to learning resources, GCSE and A level exam arrangements, hygiene practices, educational visits, and overseas holidays. We will update the appropriate page on our website as soon as we have further information

Student access to learning resources

As you may be aware there are numerous learning resources available to all of our students – via our e-schools portal (this is where staff share learning resources with students). Departments have reminded all of their students about ensuring that they are familiar with how to access our resources so that, in the event of a closure, students will be able to access such resources from home.

Departments are also working to ensure that students know how to access subject-specific websites and resources. In particular, it would be advantageous if students in Year 11 and 13 were able to take any hardcopy resources home that they have been given in school to ensure they have sufficient support materials to aid their GCSE and A level preparation at home. As a parent/carer, I would encourage you discuss with your child their ability to access these resources from home. If there are any technical issues, then please advise them to contact our IT support team. If you do not have internet access at home, please contact us and we will arrange alternative resources.

GCSE and A Level Public exams

As the news is tending to change on a daily basis, I can appreciate that many of our students and parents may be worried about the potential impact on the summer public exams. As a school we are monitoring the advice that is being provided by Ofqual – the examinations regulator. As of this week, Ofqual's advice is to continue to prepare for exams and other assessments as normal. Ofqual will continue to work closely with exam boards, other regulators and the Department for Education to plan for a range of scenarios. Their overriding priorities are fairmindedness to all students this summer and ensuring disruption is kept to a minimum.

The Year 11 core mock exams are still scheduled to take place Tuesday 24th March to Monday 30th March. Non-core departments will also be running mock exams within their own subject areas. As per our earlier communication before Christmas our exams team has already communicated that students should be available up to and including the 24th June 2020. Since 2018, the Joint Council for Qualifications has put this date in place should there be a 'sustained national or local disruption arise during the summer 2020 examination series'.

If there is to be any change to Ofqual's advice, we will let you know as soon as possible. In the meantime, our students should focus on keeping their good study routines in place, capitalising on regular learning opportunities, practising past paper questions and other appropriate revising strategies to ensure they are prepared and ready for the summer exams.



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Hygiene

Our site team are doing frequent checks on all of our toilets to ensure that soap dispensers have soap and are in working order. Regular hand washing is still the best way to ensure that germs of any sort are not transferred from person to person.

Our cleaning team are regularly cleaning hand rails and door handles, in addition to the normal cleaning regime that is in place at the end of the school day. We have put posters on display around the school that highlight the key NHS advice hand-washing and use of tissues for coughs and sneezes. We would continue to appreciate your support with emphasizing to your child the importance of regular handwashing as this will help to keep them and others safe and well.

Educational Visits

We are continuing to follow Public Health England and Foreign Office travel advice which can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19> and advice from our risk management advisors for educational visits.

A number of educational visits have been cancelled by the organisers over the last week. We expect that this will continue to be the case and will inform parents and carers as soon as we have further information about any future planned educational visits.

Overseas holidays

With the Easter holidays approaching fast we would like to re-emphasise how important it is for parents and carers to stay aware of the world situation. If you are returning from a country, please can we request that you check online whether the government's advice on the country has changed while you have been out of the country.

At present only a small number of countries in the Far East and Italy in Europe have been designated Category 1 or Category 2 which have certain travel restriction and advice but this may change rapidly.

The following two website pages give good advice about travel to and return from countries around the world:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public>

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>.

If you are in any doubt about whether your child should return to school having been outside the country, please phone the department for education help line on **0800 046 8687**.

Yours sincerely,

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