



19 March 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

As you will no doubt be aware, it was announced last night by the Prime Minister that schools across England will close at the end of the day on Friday but that children of 'key workers' and certain other vulnerable children are able to continue to attend if they wish in order to support the most vulnerable and reduce pressure on the NHS and public services.

The purpose of this letter is to ensure you have all the information necessary to support your family at home and to contact us if you need to.

### **Identifying Key Workers**

Later today we will be informed of which roles classify as 'key workers'. Once we have this information, we will circulate it to all parents. Please can we ask that you use this list to decide whether you are in a position which requires your child to attend school from Monday. If you feel that this is the case, please could you contact us as soon as possible to enable us to plan accordingly. If we have not heard from you by the end of this week, we will assume that you have made alternative arrangements for your child. We must also remember that many of our staff have children who will need their parent at home, reducing further our capacity to have large numbers of students in school. Once we have a list of students who need to attend school from Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March, we will contact them directly with specific arrangements and will continue to communicate directly with these families over the coming weeks.

### **Potentially Vulnerable Students and EHCP Students**

In line with government guidance, we will be contacting directly the parents of those children with an EHCP and those who may be more vulnerable today. We will be offering in-school provision for these students, where appropriate.

### **Year 11**

We have been made aware that examinations for our Year 11 students have been cancelled. We are still awaiting clear guidance regarding what will happen next for students in Year 11 regarding their transition to future study. We are in direct communication with local colleges and will provide information as soon as we have it. I delivered an assembly to Year 11 students this morning to put them at ease, answer any questions they may have and to reassure them that we would deliver an 'end of year experience' including all of the usual 'goodbye' experiences. When we are clear on what this will include and when each aspect will take place, we will inform our Year 11 students. As I said to them this morning, this is not goodbye from us. We will continue to be in touch with them over the coming weeks. We are proud of every Year 11 student and will ensure that we support their transition to further study in September.

### **Home learning**

Resources to support your child's learning will be placed on Google Classroom for every student. These will be subject-specific and will include activities which are suitable for each year group. Year 11 have been provided with paper based resources to compliment the online learning they have available. All of our staff, with the exception of those who are unwell, are contactable via Epraise during working hours.

Should you be unable to contact a specific member of staff, please send me a message and I will endeavour to help you with your query.

### **Free School Meals**

We are aware that the government is in the process of producing a voucher to be sent to the parents of those children who are eligible for free school meals. We will continue to produce meals today and tomorrow for Year 8 and 9 students eligible for free school meals. Please inform us if your child would like to have one of these meals. Students can then collect these from the school Reception.

As soon as we have clear guidance on how the voucher scheme will operate, we will be in touch via Epraise with those parents who are eligible. We have kindly been contacted by St Peter & St Paul's Church who are happy to transport the free school meals to those families who may be self-isolating or live in rural areas of our catchment. If this is something which you would be interested in, please contact us at school.

### **Safeguarding**

If you have a safeguarding concern during this period of closure please would you contact Mr Ian Law or myself. Mr Law and I can be contacted through Epraise, via the school telephone number or I can be contacted at [whitstone@educ.somerset.gov.uk](mailto:whitstone@educ.somerset.gov.uk).

### **Our contact with you**

We have organised for our office staff, myself and Mr Law to have access to vital office documentation and SIMs while the school is closed. This should enable us (as long as staff are well) to continue our contact with you through email, school website, Facebook and Epraise. It is likely we will not be able to send letters through the email system but we will send messages to inform you of where to find communication.

### **Further contact**

If you have any major concerns that do not relate to your child's work (which should be directed to teachers) or safeguarding (directed to Mr Law in the first instance). My work email address is [whitstone@educ.somerset.gov.uk](mailto:whitstone@educ.somerset.gov.uk) and whilst I will do my best to keep in close contact with you, please do get in touch if you need clarification on a particular matter. I know you will respect that there will be times when I am unable to respond but I will do so as soon as I can.

Finally, I wish you and your families the very best. Closing the school does not come easily to any Headteacher but the health of our whole community is paramount at this time and we must follow what we have been told to do. Thank you to all of you and, in particular, to the exceptional staff and students at our wonderful school for their patience, good humour and kindness during these difficult times.

Yours faithfully



Mr Guy Swallow  
Headteacher