

March 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

Thank you so much for the support we have received since the government announcement regarding school closure. This is a difficult time for everyone and I know the news will have come as a surprise for many and is causing concern.

You may be aware that the government have now issued further guidance around the definition of keyworkers. However, I would like to stress that the government have also said:

“The principle is that if children can stay safely at home, they should, to limit the chance of the virus spreading. The Government is asking parents to keep their children at home, wherever possible – schools will remain open only for those children who absolutely need to attend.”

“If it is at all possible for children to be at home, then they should be as the fewer children making the journey to school, and the fewer children in educational settings, the lower the risk that the virus can spread and infect vulnerable individuals in wider society.”

Given other measures announced by the government regarding self-isolation for people with underlying health issues, we are operating on reduced staffing levels. We will always do what we can but we urge parents to adhere to the guidance above to help us in supporting parents, carers and pupils who need this the most and to limit the risk of infection. I urge you, please, to consider this very carefully as we will have to close our doors fully if we cannot guarantee the safety of children.

Parents have been asked by text message to identify whether they fall into the key worker categories and to let us know if they would like to use this provision. Please do this by replying to the relevant text message if you have not done so already, as we are unable to handle large numbers of phone calls. Once students are identified then parents will be contacted separately regarding what is available in school.

Home Learning

We will be providing home learning resources for students in Years 7-10. These will be available through the school website at www.johnwillmottschool.co.uk. These resources are available via the pupil drive and information regarding how to access this is detailed below and will be posted out to all parents today. Students will need to use their normal school login details. If there are any problems regarding this please contact the school via the enquiry line at enquiry@jws.bham.sch.uk. Please bear with us as this may take some time depending on the available staffing in school.

These resources will be updated regularly and include subject specific work as well as broader resources from PiXL and Aim Higher. A range of websites that may be useful are also included in this pack.

Examination results

We are awaiting further advice and guidance from the government in relation to the awarding of GCSE and A Levels and will share this as soon as we have it. In the meantime if students require additional support with applications to sixth form, university or apprenticeships please do e mail the enquiry line and we will support as required.

Students who receive Free School Meals

We are in the process of making arrangements for students in receipt of free school meals. A text message has been sent to these parents asking them to ensure that we have an up to date e mail address. Once we have this, shopping vouchers will be provided to the value of each students free school meals for the period from the closure of the school this week until Easter. If your child is currently in receipt of free school meals and you have not received this text please contact the school at the enquiry e mail address or by the main school number. This is intended to support families until the government voucher scheme has been established.

If your circumstances have recently changed it is important that you check if you are eligible to claim free school meals. There is information to support you with this enclosed with this letter and on the school website. Please submit your claim as quickly as possible as this may entitle you to whatever scheme the government put in place in the near future.

Student safeguarding information

Staff will continue to monitor the safety and well-being of our students. If you require additional support please contact the school via the enquiry e mail address. Someone will get back to you as soon as possible but this is not monitored 24 hours a day and we will be running on reduced staffing. If you require urgent assistance and believe that someone is at immediate risk of harm then please call the police.

The pastoral team will remain in touch with families throughout the period of closure and provide assistance where they can.

Communication

You will appreciate that things have changed very quickly in the last few days so updates on COVID-19 can be found at <http://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

The Department for Education coronavirus helpline is;
DfE.coronavirushelpline@education.gov.uk 0800 046 8687

Thank you for your ongoing support. This is a rapidly evolving situation and we will continue to update you on a regular basis with weekly briefings on the school website.

Yours faithfully

Mrs T Peters
Headteacher