

20 March 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

Re: School Closure

I am writing to update you following the Government's decision to close schools at the end of the school day on Friday 20 March. Although the announcement by the Government is a serious escalation in the fight against the Coronavirus pandemic and will have come as a shock to many people, we have been planning for this eventuality for a number of weeks. Whilst we are uncertain of when schools will reopen, we want to reassure you that your children's education will continue, even if they are not physically in the building.

Remote Learning

We have been busy preparing classwork, resources, homework menus and presentations for students so that they can continue with their studies during this closure. Subject work for each class and year group can be accessed through Classcharts and through Google classrooms/Google Drive. A help-sheet explaining how to access Google Drive from home is attached and available for students and parents/carers on our website. Students have been informed of how to access the materials.

Staff will be ensuring that work is regularly available and it is vital that students complete all of the tasks that they are set. If students are unsure or have questions, they can email their subject teachers for additional help or guidance. We understand that this may be a new way of working for many students, but please be reassured that we are ready to fully support every individual in their education at this difficult time. Completed work can be emailed to teachers for marking purposes.

In addition, online resources such as SAM Learning, My Maths and Educake are available to all students and they have their passwords to access these programmes. Please check that you and your child can access these from home. **If you have any issues with using the internet, please let us know as a matter of urgency so that we can make alternative arrangements for your child (eg. hard copies of learning booklets and resources).**

What we expect from our Students

It is important to remind our students that **this is not an extended holiday** and, whilst they may not be at school, they are still in education. In these times of uncertainty, it is essential that students maintain a routine as this will focus their minds, provide structure to their days and will support their well-being. With this in mind, they should be up, dressed and ready to work by 9am.

What can Parents/Carers do to help?

Please remain calm and positive to support your children who may be anxious or worried. The example you set in helping to establish a routine for your children at home will have a profound impact. Where possible, please provide them with a quiet place to work that limits distractions. Encourage your children to have a scheduled approach throughout the day which includes schoolwork and study, leisure time and exercise. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your child's academic work, please do not hesitate to contact the relevant subject teachers by email.

Year 11 and Year 13 Students

The Government have confirmed that assessments and external examinations for Year 11 and Year 13 students will not go ahead this year, but they have reassured schools that they will ensure children get the qualifications that they need. At this stage we do not know the details or wider implications, but we will fully support our students so that their transition to the next stage in their education, training or employment is smooth and successful. Whilst external examinations have been cancelled, academic work will still be set by their subject teachers and we expect all students to continue to complete these tasks as this will consolidate their learning. We will keep students and parents/carers informed of any developments from the Government regarding qualification outcomes.

As we are uncertain as to when the school will reopen, important events such as Celebration Days have been put on hold. All events will be rescheduled accordingly so that we can acknowledge our students' achievements and celebrate together.

Health and Well-Being

During these difficult times, people can become anxious or fearful. For spiritual comfort, please visit our website where we have provided prayers and reflections for those in need. There are also useful links to practical advice, supporting people's health and well-being. In addition, the link below may help to clarify points in preventing the spread of the virus.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/common-questions/>

If you are in need of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us by using:

- the MyEd app
- staff@stjohnsrc.org.uk
- Work email addresses of relevant staff

Finally, it is worth remembering that, when we are faced with difficult times, we work together in partnership, supporting our young people to find the strength, determination and resilience to deal with life's challenges. Thank you for your continued support and understanding and please look after one another during the coming weeks.

Yours sincerely,

Lisa Byron
Head Teacher