

16<sup>th</sup> March 2020



Principal **Nick Martin**  
BSc, MA, PGCE, NPQH

Dear Parents and Carers,

The situation surrounding the coronavirus is changing rapidly and this letter acts to update you on our current position. I can assure you that we are taking all of the necessary steps to protect our community and are continuing to follow official guidance from the government, Public Health England and the Local Authority.

### 1. School closure

The academy is continuing to **remain open**. However, following the government announcement that people should self-isolate if they have any symptoms, we are anticipating that an increasing number of students and staff will be absent over the coming weeks. We have clear plans in place for various scenarios, including the partial closure for specific year groups, if the number of staff decreases to a point where we cannot maintain the required staff to student ratios. The Academy will respond accordingly to any government decision regarding the closure of schools as they are announced. If this should happen, then school work will be set for students through Show My Homework and via the Google Learning platform. Tutors will spend the next few days ensuring their tutees have all the up to date logins and passwords. We have had assurances from Show My Homework that they are prepared for the extra traffic, if schools have to move to a position of supporting student learning remotely. If your child is going to find it difficult to access materials online please contact Mr Rowell.

### 2. Overseas trips

On Thursday the government 'advised' against all overseas school trips; as a result, we have been in dialogue with each of the trip providers and our insurance company to clarify the status of each trip and any possible refund.

If the scheduled trip is to a country where the government has already stopped all travel, or the country has closed their borders to people from Europe, then the trip will obviously not go ahead and we will be requesting a full refund. As you can imagine, some of the trip providers are keen to 'reschedule' rather than 'refund' at this stage, but we have explained that for many of the trips this will not be possible as students will have left. As soon as we have any confirmation we will update you directly.

Where the country is still open to tourists, the position is more complicated and the providers are reluctant to discuss compensation at this stage. However, this position is obviously changing by the hour and we will be contacting parents directly with an update on each trip over the next few days, once information is received.

### 3. Trips within the UK

The current advice from the government is that trips within the UK should continue and that staff and students should follow all the government advice about protecting themselves from the virus.

Therefore, at this stage, all trips within the UK are still running. However, many families have already made the decision to withdraw from upcoming trips, and low numbers may result in trips no longer being viable. Once again, staff will be in contact with parents directly about specific trips and events.

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#### 4. Exams

At this moment in time there is no firm position from the government on the upcoming exams; they have said that they are working with Ofqual and the exam boards to ensure no students are disadvantaged. We will update you as soon as we have more information, but I can assure you that we will do everything we possibly can to ensure our students are not disadvantaged in any way and we will take every possible measure to ensure they get the results they deserve.

#### 5. Assemblies

At Samuel Whitbread we have over 400 students who attend assemblies each day; therefore, we have taken the decision to cancel all assemblies and deliver the messages through tutor time.

#### 6. Fixtures

In line with the national picture on sporting events we are postponing all school fixtures.

#### 7. Parents' evenings

We have decided to postpone the Y10 and Y12 parents' evenings until later in the Summer term. In the meantime, if you would like to speak to one of the teachers concerning something in your child's report or a concern you may have, then please do not hesitate to contact the teacher by email or by telephone. All contact details are available on the website. If any staff have concerns regarding a student's progress then they will contact you directly.

#### 8. Spring concert, Drama evening, Dance show, Easter School and Y11 English/Maths information evening

We have decided to cancel the Spring concert, Drama evening, Dance show and Y11 English/Maths information evenings. Any performances that would have taken place at the Spring concert or Dance show will be performed at the Summer Arts Festival instead. The information and slides for the Y11 English/Maths information evening will be uploaded to the school website for all parents. If you have already bought a ticket for the Spring concert then please contact Miss Meadows for a refund. Easter School will go ahead if the school is open.

Please be assured that the safety of our students and the community is paramount. These are unprecedented times and as we receive further information on any of the above, we will update you accordingly.

Yours sincerely



Nick Martin  
Principal

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