



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

Dear Parent / Carers

COVID-19 – update for parents

In light of the announcements made by the government on Wednesday evening, the school will be closed from Monday 23rd March until further notice, except for key worker and vulnerable children. At present, schools have not been provided with any further information, but we are working tirelessly to ensure we can support our community. We have requested that parents complete a survey regarding their key worker status. This will be essential for us to plan effective care and support.

The Prime Minister also announced the cancellation of all public examinations in May and June. As soon as we receive additional information on how this will affect children in year 11 and 13, we will inform you. We can reassure all parents/carers that Samuel Whitbread will ensure no child is disadvantaged. The hard work, commitment and dedication your child has shown will not be for nothing. We do not want to make any assumptions regarding the process and until clear and concrete guidance is issued to schools regarding examinations we cannot comment. We ask for your continued patience at this difficult time.

We have tried to provide answers to some frequent enquires below:

How will we keep in touch with you?

As we receive further information, we will contact you via Parentmail. Information posted in this way will also be available on the website.

Will the school provide work for my child?

Yes. Work will be available and posted on Show My Homework and via our shared Google Drive. In addition, our website contains specific subject information for KS4 & KS3. The KS5 learning platform also contains key information. All areas will be updated regularly by teaching staff (providing they are healthy and able to do so).

How much work should my child be completing during this time?

Teachers will aim to set a similar amount of work as would be covered during a lesson, and for any subsequent homework. That would mean that most students should be completing around four or five hours a day of work at home, but please bear in mind that your child will need time for physical activity too within the constraints of social distancing guidance.

Will work that students produce during this time be marked or assessed?

Where possible teachers will provide feedback. We will ask teachers to be as clear as possible about when work will be checked and what type of feedback can be provided. Doing this remotely is not as easy as it is in person, so we ask for your patience and understanding in this area.

My child is entitled to Free School Meals. I am worried about the cost of feeding them during this period of closure.

The Prime Minister announced that the government will look to support students who are eligible for free school meals. Our central contact for any scheme will be Mr Richard Candlin. Any updates will be sent through him.

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My child is becoming very worried and anxious. I'm concerned about their well-being. What can I do?

We have signposted students to support if they are feeling worried about the situation. This will be covered in tutor time on 20.3.20. The powerpoint shared with students in tutor time is also being made available on show my homework. They can also contact our designated safeguarding leads, Miss Hood Chood@bestacademies.org.uk or Mr Rowell trowell@bestacademies.org.uk when they are at home who will be able to support them.

The following link is useful in talking through with your children <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/>

We do not have internet access. What can I do?

This is not an easy situation to remedy. Where possible, and if Government advice allows this, we would advise you to visit a nearby centre, family member or neighbour where you can access a connection and download some of the work set to be completed later. We recommend that as much work as possible is downloaded and saved to avoid absolute reliance on a continual internet connection. We are looking at providing Mobile Wifi for those that may need it.

We do not have a computer that my child can use at home. What can I do?

Please ask your child to go to the IT Network office to sign out a Chromebook. The device will be checked when issued and will need to be kept safe and returned to us undamaged. Parents will be responsible for any loss or damage to a device that a student has signed out. We do not have enough laptop computers or devices to provide equipment to all students for use at home, but we will work with you to try and provide solutions where possible. It is important that you tell us if your child is struggling to access or complete the work set.

I've forgotten my passwords, what do I do?

A new email inbox has been specifically created for students and parents to request password resets or basic help with accessing work. Remember that work is being set on Show My Homework and the Google Shared Drive.

StudentITSupport@bestacademies.org.uk We will require the following information to verify identity in order to have an account reset:

- Full Name
- DOB
- Address

Hopefully you understand this is required for security purposes and is GDPR compliant.

How to I access the Google Shared Drive?

Watch this helpful video <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1G68b7oXdfmZk1n8L-ZjIY1C-uvVsBQW8/view>

My child's teacher is on social media (Facebook or Twitter) – should I contact them?

No. Please use staff email contacts to contact staff. Staff have been instructed not to communicate with parents via social media.

As you will understand this is a difficult period for us all and I appreciate your understanding in the constantly changing landscape.

Yours sincerely



Nick Martin
Principal

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