



19th March 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

Re: Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update - School Closure

Following the most recent update from the government, I am writing to let you know that **we have now been instructed to close the school to almost all children after this Friday, 20th March, until further notice.**

For us at Biddenham, we have been working hard to minimise the impact on our school community and allow learning to continue, but in order for us to plan effectively for home learning we will need to finish school at 1.00pm on Friday to brief staff on how best to support our students and their families.

On Monday 23rd March, part of the school will be open for our most vulnerable young people (those who have an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) or who have current social care involvement) and the children of key workers such as those whose parents/carers are on the front line in the fight against the virus in the NHS, emergency services, social workers, teachers and school workers, care workers and those involved in the delivery of our vital supply chains including those who work in supermarkets and food stores.

We ask that key worker parents/carers, with children who cannot be accommodated at home, contact the school as soon as possible on 01234 342521.

All other children will need to stay at home, so we ask that you do not send your child into school from Monday onwards.

Cancellation of GCSE and A Level Exams:

The government also made the announcement that all exams in May and June had been cancelled, including GCSEs and A Levels. We understand that this will be disappointing and unsettling news. Our students have worked really hard to prepare for these assessments and will also be worried about what this means for their futures.

It is important therefore to let you know that the government has also undertaken to work with schools, Ofqual (the exams watchdog) and the exam boards to ensure children get the qualifications that they need. Universities UK has also said that students should not lose the chance to go to university this year because of this action. We are still awaiting details about implementing this action moving forward, but can assure you that we will work tirelessly with the government to ensure that our young people are not disadvantaged.

Whilst we are not in possession of the full details please do not speculate about what may or may not happen - it is important not to worry unduly and create more stress for yourselves and your children.

What to do if your child has symptoms:

Keep your child at home for 14 days and self-isolate the whole family, if they have either:

- a high temperature
- a new continuous cough

Although symptoms for children and young people tend to be mild, this will help to protect others in our community while your child or other family members are infectious.

You are advised not to go to a GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital and directed to use the NHS online tools ([NHS 111 online](#)) rather than calling NHS 111. The link below gives helpful guidance for staying at home.

- [COVID-19: stay at home guidance](#)

Advice and Guidance:

Further advice and guidance includes the following:

- Everyone should stop non-essential contact with others. This is particularly important for people over 70, those with underlying health conditions and pregnant women ([see link for further guidance](#)).
- People should work from home where they can.
- People should avoid places like pubs, clubs and theatres ([guidance for social distancing and for vulnerable people](#)).
- People should stop all unnecessary travel [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): latest information and advice](#).
- By the weekend, those with the most serious health conditions should be largely shielded from social contact for 12 weeks.

Please note that this information is regularly updated and you should, therefore, refer back to it for any changes:

- [Information for the public](#)
- [Guidance for educational settings](#)

Other action you should take:

A UK-wide campaign has been launched to provide clear advice on how to slow the spread of coronavirus.

Please help to support the campaign which promotes basic hygiene practices, such as regularly washing hands and always sneezing into a tissue (and then immediately disposing of it), to stem the spread of viruses. See advice from the NHS on [washing your hands](#).

If you have any concerns regarding Coronavirus linked to your child's health, the [NHS 111 online Coronavirus service](#) can provide initial advice and guidance.

Learning resources:

All lesson and revision resources will be shared online with students on Google classroom. Google classrooms can be accessed on chromebooks, laptops, desktops, tablets and other mobile devices with internet access.

Please contact the school in relation to any concerns or queries you may have. The safety and education of the students and staff in our school community is of paramount importance. We need to continue to work together to achieve this and to do our part in tackling the COVID-19 virus.

We will continue to communicate regularly and swiftly with any updates as they arise.

Yours sincerely,



Ms E Grylls
Head of School