

WOOTTON ACADEMY TRUST

Wednesday 18 March 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

Re: Coronavirus – Update

At the risk of being too repetitive we are in uncharted waters and this evening's letter will include an initial response to the Prime Minister and Secretary of State's statements late this afternoon. The key messages are:

schools and colleges will close after school on Friday until further notice for most children, except for children of key workers and other key groups of children, including those with an Education Health Care Plan and those children with a social worker;

the definition of children of key workers will be published tomorrow, but are likely to include the children of emergency service workers [NHS, Police, Fire], staff who work in schools and colleges, civil servants;

schools and colleges will remain open over the Easter holidays to support the children of key workers above *[how this will work will become clearer over the next few days]*;

no public examinations will take place this summer for Year 11 and Year 13 students; grades for these courses will be awarded in a different way; the details of how this will work are still being finalized;

Free School Meals will continue to be provided through the closure, but the mechanism for this is not clear, beyond that it will be facilitated using a co-ordinated approach.

Tomorrow morning Bedford Borough school secondary head teachers are participating in a conference call with the Local Authority to agree how we can best secure some of the above points.

Year 11 assessments scheduled for the next two school days will continue as planned, as they will form part of the grades awarded to these children. However, if a child cannot attend, due to self-isolation, or ill-health they will not be disadvantaged.

Once the definition of key worker is published we will ask you to let us know if you are in this critical group of workers and therefore, whether your child will be in school/college. We know who our children with Educational Health Care Plans are, and we believe we know all the children in our school and college who have a social worker.

We know the announcement about GCSE and A level and BTEC qualifications will come as an enormous shock to all our students, as well as to you, their parents/carer and indeed to everybody working in the school and college. We recognize that given the enormity of the situation there is no alternative to the decision. It will take all of us time to understand how grades will be awarded and therefore, it is still very important that Year 11 and Year 13 students continue to work hard. As soon as we know more, we will let you know and your children know.

Attendance at the school and college remains lower than normal. Today attendance was broadly similar to yesterday:

Year 9 **70%** Year 10 **74%** Year 11 **79%** Year 12 **75%** Year 13 **65%**

Attendance of staff is **92%**

Tomorrow we will publish a range of documents we have been working on in anticipation of enforced school closures including information on distance learning and safeguarding. In the interim, [please will you complete a short survey for us on the IT equipment you have at home which your child/children will be able to access during the period when they will be engaged in distance learning.](#) Please use this link <https://forms.gle/miSr3gyxKvNKjHsa9>

All information about the work set for students working at home will be provided through the **Show My Homework** platform. Parents/carers also have login details for this platform; please email it@wootton.beds.sch.uk if you are not sure how to access the site.

The rising number of deaths from the virus and the rapidly increasing spike in the number of cases means that the decision taken today by government is right. We all have our individual part to play in overcoming what is very quickly unfolding in front of us.

I feel I ought to apologize for the lateness of this communication this evening; you will understand that some of the announcements made by the Prime Minister, in particular the implications related to no public examinations taking place this summer and how we make available provision for the children of key workers in the weeks ahead and ensure children entitled to Free School Meals – and those likely to be entitled to Free School Meals moving forward - have created some challenges to us. These challenges though are nothing in the scheme of things compared to the challenges faced by so many families tonight with relations who are desperately ill. Our thoughts should be with them and those caring for them and to those families who have lost relations today due to the virus. Our thoughts and prayers are with them and with the key workers in the emergency services.

The Trust is determined to play its part in doing everything possible to provide support for the children of key workers and other children and families in the weeks and months ahead.

Yours sincerely

Michael Gleeson
Executive Principal
Wootton Academy Trust

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