



6<sup>th</sup> January 2021

## **School Closure January 2021**

Dear Parents and Carers,

It is with sadness that I must write to you about another period of prolonged school closure following the government announcement of a national lockdown. In these times of such difficulty and uncertainty I would like to extend the best wishes of everyone at Wade Deacon and reassure you that we remain absolutely committed to supporting our students, families and wider community in the coming weeks and months.

There still remains a lot that is unclear at this stage, but we know that school will remain closed to all but eligible students until at least the end of the February half term. It has now been confirmed that exams for Year 11 students have been cancelled and replaced with some form of teacher assessment, though we await clarity on this matter. I know that Year 11 students and their families will feel disappointed and anxious about this change, but it is important that students try not to worry and continue to work with the resilience, enthusiasm and determination to evidence the standards they are capable of.

## **Remote Learning**

We will do everything possible to minimise disruption this term by delivering our curriculum through quality remote learning; I am delighted by the high levels of engagement we have already seen from students this week.

From Monday 11<sup>th</sup> January, all students will access their full timetable of remote live lessons, planned and delivered by their teachers via School Synergy and Teams. In some practical subjects in Key Stage 3 (such as PE, food technology, music and drama) where activities are better suited to remote learning than live lessons, students will be set activities that they complete more flexibly.

We have well-established routines and systems in place to deliver and monitor remote learning, and detailed guidance can be found on our website. It is vital that all students have access to suitable devices for learning. Ideally, students will be able to use their own tablet or laptop so that they can fully engage in remote learning. If IT or internet access presents any difficulties for you please contact the school urgently.

## **Vocational Exams (Year 10 and 11)**

In light of the current circumstances, we have taken the decision as a Trust to cancel all vocational exams that were due to be taken in January. After careful consideration of health and safety issues and discussion with other local schools and colleges, we feel that students would be disadvantaged by sitting exams at this time given the uncertainty about how grades will be awarded in the summer.

## **School Places for Critical Workers and Vulnerable Students**

The DfE provide schools with the criteria for students who would be regarded as 'vulnerable', and we contact with relevant parents/carers directly to discuss support. If you are a critical worker, we can provide a school place for your child if you cannot make alternative arrangements for their care. In order for us to ensure we have appropriate staffing in place for this, we will ask that you notify us of your requirements each week using an online survey that will be sent to you via email. We realise that working patterns and circumstances can change, so we will aim to be as flexible as possible with this support. However, if you have not given us 24-hours notice, we will be unable to accommodate your child in school. Students will be supported to access the same remote learning activities as those who are working at home. Those attending should arrive at 8.45am, must wear full school uniform and continue to follow our rules for safety and maintain social distancing. A restricted menu for breaks and lunches will be available.



### **Pastoral Care**

During lockdown, we will also continue to prioritise pastoral support as we realise how challenging it can be to balance remote learning with work and family life in these circumstances. Our dedicated and experienced pastoral teams are well-placed to assist our students and families, and tutors will continue to communicate with their form groups to ensure our students feel supported. Likewise, our Progress Leaders will deliver remote assemblies and other activities to keep our school community connected and united.

### **Mass Testing**

As you know, before the lockdown was announced we were developing plans to test students in school. Whilst we continue to work on these plans, the focus will be on the testing of staff and students who are attending school regularly over the coming months.

As always, we will ensure you are kept informed should our plans need to change as the situation develops. In the meantime, I know our school community will continue to look after each other during this challenging time.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "S. Corner".

Mr S Corner  
Principal