

19 March 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

Thank you for your patience today, whilst we all try to process the information that was issued to the public yesterday evening. I hope to clarify several matters for you, but please also be aware that there are still many unknowns for us. Things are changing every moment and we will keep you fully in the loop, so do keep an eye out for updates.

I apologise in advance for the length of this message, but I would encourage you to read it all carefully. As I am sure you can appreciate, with the ever-evolving picture, we are not always able to respond to individual queries. Therefore, in the first instance, please refer directly to any emailed communication such as this and the new section on our website, which will contain links to all of this communication and the latest Department of Education guidance.

School Closure for the Majority of Pupils

School will be closed from 4.30pm tomorrow, Friday 20 March 2020, until further notice. I, like you, genuinely do not know how long this closure will be for. There are some points in the following information that suggests I believe we will be closed for the rest of the academic year – this is not the case, but it would be wrong of me not to assume the worst case scenario and put in contingencies wherever possible. I would prefer to be over prepared, than under.

Work

- **Work will be set daily from Monday by all teachers**, and submission will be monitored by staff via Show My Homework

For Primary pupils, work set each day will involve:

- One hour of Maths
- One hour of English
- One hour of project-based learning
- Times tables
- Spellings
- Reading

For Secondary and Sixth Form pupils, work set will involve:

- Five hours of work set each day from five different subject areas, ensuring the full coverage of the curriculum across the week.
- The timetable for each year group can be found in the Coronavirus section of the website.

- **Work will be set via 'Show My Homework'** – an online package that allows home tasks to be set and accessed directly by pupils and parents on their mobile phones, tablets or through the SMHW website. An app can also be downloaded and used on most tablet devices. All Secondary parents and pupils should already have access to this, and Primary pupils have had instructions as to how to log on. If you have any issues please contact the School Office urgently.

- For those who are unable to access the internet, paper resources will be issued wherever possible. Please contact us urgently if you do not feel that we are yet aware of this.
- In addition to the daily work there is also a wealth of general resources on SMHW already, and various websites listed in my previous communication.
- **We have created an area on the school website**, under curriculum, which will contain links to all of these websites and other resources. This will be built and added to over the next couple of weeks.

Rhythm of the Year

All events that were due to occur when the school is closed, will be cancelled or postponed. However, regardless of when we reopen, we have had to make some decisions now about certain events. We may well be open again, and the world a far calmer place, by the time some of these events are due, but I hope you can appreciate we have had to make firm decisions now to support everyone:

- Years 3 and 4 Easter Production is cancelled.
- Year 6 production is cancelled. We will ensure these pupils get an opportunity for something similar in Year 7 instead.
- Year 6 residential is cancelled. Again, this may alter our thinking for Year 7.
- Year 5 residential is cancelled.
- Primary PPC is postponed to the end of the academic year. Even if we are not open we will conduct phone conversation meetings to support Primary children with transition to their new teachers.
- We are planning contingencies, should they be needed, for Year 6 to 7 transition.
- Year 10 Revision Evening is postponed until next academic year, when the pupils are in Year 11.
- 'Alice in Wonderland' is postponed until the end of this academic year, or the start of next if necessary.
- The launch of the first House Festival will now be delayed until Summer 2021.
- The New York Trip is cancelled – Mr Ray will be in touch directly with those affected.
- The MFL exchange is cancelled – Mrs Agate will be in touch directly with those affected.
- The Courage Term club enrolment will not be released until when we know the school is reopening.
- Years 10 and 12 work experience has been cancelled. If we are back by these dates, focus will need to be on curriculum coverage.

There may well be other events that we will communicate with you over the coming days and weeks.

Free School Meals

We will communicate more about Free School Meal provision as soon as possible; we are still awaiting confirmation of plans from the Government.

Examinations

I communicated separately to parents of Years 6, 11 and 13 earlier today. At present, I have no further information to give sadly, but I promise I will communicate as soon as I hear anything.

I conducted an assembly with Years 11 and 13 today. It was, in all honesty, one of the most difficult things I have ever had to do as a teacher or Principal. However, as I was talking to them several things became clear to me; there is so much more to their education and the journey they have been on than a number or letter on a page. That is simply the considered 'proof' of what they have learnt, but does not alter what they have actually learnt – nothing has been wasted. Also, we are so proud of the young adults these two cohorts have become over their time at the school, and no exam certificate could have ever truly reflected everything that they have learnt anyway – social, emotional and personal skills that will last a lifetime.

Of course, we do still hope that grades will be awarded in some way. But I also reassured the pupils that this was always going to be the next step in their journey, not the final step. Schools, colleges, universities, apprenticeships etc will all make provisions, in these exceptional circumstances, to support pupils onto this next step with or without accurate SATs, GCSE or A-Level results.

Supervision for Vulnerable Children and Children of Key Workers

At present this is the area we have the least information about. The Government have suggested that all schools will need to be partially open for specified pupils. However, there has also been suggestion that each geographical area will simply have one school hub. At present, we are planning for the former scenario. **If this happens, the School will be open from 0820-1615 every term time day until the Government instructs us otherwise for eligible pupils only.** Please be aware of the following, if this occurs:

- **Once we have confirmation of what exactly is meant by 'Key Workers' we will be sending out a Survey Monkey – I would be extremely grateful if those who fall into this category would respond as quickly as possible,** to support us in our planning. We will obviously be aware of those that fall into specified vulnerable groups.
- For the next week only enrolment will be daily, by bringing pupils to the school during the times outlined, for those eligible only. Thereafter we will use Parent Pay as a weekly booking system.
- The provision on offer will be childcare – we will supervise pupils completing the work online that those at home will be completing. This will be staffed by all members of the school community and explicit teaching will not be possible, especially with a wide range of ages.

We are still considering plans for the Easter holidays. When the nature of the provision is confirmed we will be in touch with more concrete information and plans.

Welfare and Contact

The most important job I have every day is to keep all CFS pupils safe. I, like so many Heads, are struggling with the concept that I will be less able to do this over the coming weeks. As much as possible we hope that the online communities in all areas of CFS – Show My Homework, Facebook, Whatsapp etc - help support everyone, and I am putting something similar in place for staff.

Whilst we have been focusing on academic provision initially, the team are also working on providing guidance and support for you over the difficult weeks ahead. More on this to follow. But for now, a couple of suggestions:

- PE for children starting on Monday at 0900 with Joe Wicks on his YouTube channel
- British Sign Language are offering their course to children free of charge and so they could learn a new skill <http://www.british-sign.co.uk/coronavirus-crisis/>
- Volunteering at a local food bank (older children)
- Working on a farm to pick fruit and veg as there is a national shortage (older children?): <https://www.fwi.co.uk/business/coronavirus-urgent-appeal-for-brits-to-work-on-farms>

We will do our utmost to monitor emails as much as possible, but please bear with us. **If you need to contact the school via phone, from Monday please ensure you use 01243 792690 Ext 219**

And Finally

On a personal note, can I please thank everyone in the whole school community for their utmost support and affection over the last few very difficult days. I don't say this lightly, but the CFS community is really unique, and the way the staff body has responded to what I have been asking of them is overwhelming.

Thank you. Scary and unprecedented times. But I wish you all good health – physically and mentally – over the coming weeks and look forward to seeing you all properly again when we open our doors once more, and the pupils are back where they belong.

With very best wishes,

Louise New
Principal