



16th March 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

As I write this, government advice to schools in England is not to close. However, these certainly are unprecedented times with the situation very fluid and fast-moving. Therefore it seems prudent to plan for every eventuality including school closures. This may be deemed necessary as schools pose a very obvious opportunity for the virus to spread further.

School events

Our planned programme of events will be curtailed to try and limit the likelihood of the virus entering the school and/or spreading.

This includes **cancelling**:

- The evening of Dance on Wednesday 25th March
- Year 10 Parents Evening on Thursday 26th March
- Year 7/8/9 Disco on Friday 27th March
- The Final Bash Spring Concert on Tuesday 31st March

School trips and Visits

I wrote last week to advise that we intended to similarly curtail our planned trips and visits. Overseas visits are now banned by the government, with no timeframe specified and so we imagine that all planned trips overseas - to Madrid, Ypres, Namibia will be cancelled. Lots of UK based trips are now being cancelled by the venues/organisers and certainly trips where a large no. of students from different schools were to congregate are off. Our planned trip to Penshurst Place this Thursday will go ahead but parents can of course opt daughters out if they would prefer. Unfortunately though refunds are not possible.

School Closure

In the event of the school being forced to close then we will do all we can to operate a normal curriculum for girls at home. This week we will hold an extra-ordinary staff meeting to plan for this and girls will be instructed on the likely format of this during assemblies. Our intention would be that all girls will be expected to work, at home, as per a normal school day. We will use technology such as Hegarty Maths and google classrooms to facilitate this. Girls would for example log on Monday period 1 to their timetable lessons and their teachers will have set work and be available for email enquiries. Period 2, their period 2 work would be accessed and that teacher available on line for help and guidance. We hope to be able to provide live video lessons for some lessons but will prioritise examination classes in year 11 and year 13 for this.

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Parents will be expected to ensure that girls are at home during the normal working day and working on the work set. Clearly school closure will be a last resort but the intention is to limit the spread of the virus - and this cannot be achieved if the school children of East Kent are all in Bluewater! We also have plans in place to support students on free school meals to get lunch and our school website has a list of safeguarding contacts for students.

Public Examinations

It is unclear what will happen regarding the upcoming GCSE and A Level examination series. Government and Examination boards will be working on a number of scenarios and contingency plans. This will be a national decision. We, as a school, will do all we can to support our girls through the exam period and through any contingency arrangements and will, of course, communicate these as soon as/if/when they are announced. In the meantime we must assume the examinations will go ahead as planned.

Self-Isolation

In the meantime, please read below the guidance regarding **self-isolation**.

The Department for Health and Social Care has asked anyone who shows certain symptoms to stay at home **for seven days** (even if they have not travelled to certain affected areas). The key symptoms are: • A high temperature (37.8 degrees and above) - • A new, continuous cough.

Any student who is a **confirmed case** (there are none at FSG) or is living in the same household as a **confirmed case**, should self-isolate at home **for 14 days** from the last time they had contact with the confirmed case and follow the home isolation advice sheet. Should this not be the case then students should attend school as normal unless they become unwell.

So students with sniffs or colds or living in a household with someone who has a sniff or cold really should be in school.

Reporting absence

Please could parents who are reporting a case of self-isolation state this when reporting absence in the usual way. Simply state self-isolation on medical advice **or** self-isolation as parental precaution.

These are uncertain times but the likelihood for those of us unfortunate to catch the corona virus is that it will be a temporary and flu-like illness, which we will recover from - much like any normal flu. Please then can we ask for your support in reassuring the girls of this, of the fact that we will do all we can to protect them and that we will do all we can to ensure that their education continues, despite the challenges and that those students in examination years in particular will be our absolute priority.

In the coming weeks it seems fairly inevitable that schools will have some disruption, either in increased absence rates or in partial or full closure. At all times we will be working behind the scenes to keep abreast of national guidance and to look after our girls and their education. Thank you for your ongoing support.

Yours faithfully



Mr Mark Lester
Principal