

19 March 2020

Email: admin@horburyprimary.accordmat.org
Website: www.horburyprimary.accordmat.org

Dear Parents/Carers,

Executive Principal: Miss JK Tomlinson

COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus): Confirmation of Academy Closure on 20 March 2020

As you will be aware we have received notification from the Government of the directive to close all schools from Friday 20 March 2020 as part of the nation's strategy to prevent / delay Covid-19. This will mean that all pupils will be sent home at the usual time on Friday 20 March 2020. In line with the Government's directive, as a Trust we will be continuing to provide for the following groups of pupils:

- Vulnerable pupils – classified specifically by the Government yesterday as pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP's) and those with social worker involvement.
- Pupils whose parents are described as 'key workers' – again, the Government outlined 'key workers' yesterday as NHS staff, the police and supermarket delivery drivers.

The academy will be releasing an online survey in order to ascertain which of our parents and carers are identifying themselves as 'key workers'. The specific details relating to the confirmed categories of 'key workers' are included in the survey and further details are outlined in a later section of this letter.

Clearly the current situation represents a significant challenge to everyone involved, however at the point of confirming closure, the academy is in a position to confirm that the following arrangements will remain in place to support pupils and parents as follows:

Communication from the Academy

All communication from the academy to parents / carers during the period of closure will be made through the following means:

- Website – the academy website, at <https://horburyprimary.accordmat.org>, provides access to key information, dates, policies and whole-academy / year group letters that will be distributed during the period of closure and is our main method of communication to parents / carers, used for letters and announcements.
- Letters – whilst there will be no hard copy letters distributed, we will continue to issue copies of whole-academy or year group letters on the academy website.
- Social Media – the academy will continue to use Facebook and twitter to communicate during the period of closure. However, it is important to note that social media accounts will not be used as a means of two-way communication.

Contacting the Academy

During the period of closure, the academy will adopt the following arrangements for parents / carers to make contact as follows:

- **Email** – this would be the prime mechanism for contacting the academy, with the following email addresses set out for reference:
 - admin@horburyprimary.accordmat.org – for all generic enquiries.
 - techsupport@accordmat.org – for all technical enquiries relating to any technical issues relating to the website and accessing work that pupils may use.

We will endeavour to respond to all email enquiries as soon as possible, specifically within a 72-hour period. It is important to note that there is no guarantee of a response from any colleagues' individual email addresses in the academy during the period of closure.

- **Telephone Calls** – there will be no availability for parents / carers to contact the academy by telephone during the period of closure.

External Examinations and Testing for Pupils in Year 6

Whilst the Government confirmed the cancellation of SATs examinations in May and June of this academic year, at this moment in time we work under the premise that those tests and examinations may be rescheduled and / or will operate in a different format. Clearly this is a very unsettling situation for young people, but please rest assured that we will do all that we can to ensure that all pupils are not at a detriment in whatever alternative arrangements might be put in place.

As previously confirmed, any agreed alternatives will be accompanied by our commitment of extensive support as has been the case to date.

We understand that there may be a further update on Friday 20 March from the Education Secretary on this matter. It is important that pupils take every opportunity to continue their preparations and to study from home.

Provision of Work for Pupils

Whilst the academy will be closed, we will seek to maintain our focus on the continued education of our pupils through the provision of work in the following ways:

- **Website Resources** – the website has a landing page for pupils where they can access resources, but also specific links to a range of online learning.

As part of a wider Trust Policy on remote working arrangements, teaching staff will be in a position to update and refresh work on a twice weekly basis. Colleagues will do all that they can to maintain this provision throughout the period of closure, however we would ask all parents / carers to be mindful of the following:

- Online / home learning places an emphasis on all pupils to establish a routine of working from home, our teaching colleagues will not be in a position to follow up on all work that has been set.
- The academy will seek to provide ongoing advice and support to pupils and parents about online / home learning using the communication channels.
- Pupils may record the completion of some of their work in an exercise book that the Academy has provided.
- Unfortunately, our staff team may at times be in a position where they are unavailable for work. This would be in keeping with all other working adults at this present time, with increasing numbers of staff unavailable for work across the country.

- When there are occasions where work cannot be provided across all subjects / year groups on a twice weekly basis due to the availability of staff, we would seek to communicate this to parents / carers and ask for your understanding in this respect.

The provision of work for pupils will begin fully from Monday 23 March.

Arrangements for Vulnerable Pupils and Children of 'Key Workers'

This is clearly a difficult time for all families, however we are aware that some families will be impacted significantly during the period of closure. The Government has clearly set out their intention to provide continued supervision for both vulnerable pupils and the children of 'key workers'. This is a strategy that the Government is adopting to protect the most vulnerable and to ensure that we provide the necessary support to identified front line workers in response to Covid-19.

Shortly, all parents will be issued with a text with a link to an online survey (also available on the website) to identify those parents who are classified as 'key workers'. In order that we can organise suitable staffing measures in an extremely tight timeline, we would ask for all responses by 3:00pm on Friday 20 March 2020. This will allow us to ensure that sufficient provision is in place to include lunches, and appropriate staffing for Monday 23 March 2020.

Given the classification by the Government of vulnerable pupils, we will be making contact with those parents / carers of eligible pupils directly. The Government directive here is clear, and therefore there will be no provision for any other pupils that do not fall within the directive, and we would ask parents / carers to be understanding in this respect.

You will appreciate that schools are closed for public health reasons and as such these emergency measures should only be explored where absolutely necessary. We will be putting in place provision from Monday 23 March 2020, and will also be aiming to provide these emergency care arrangements as a Trust throughout the Easter period where requested. As soon as we are able to confirm those specific arrangements, we will do so with parents / carers who are seeking this support.

Collection of Medication

We would ask that parents / carers make necessary arrangements for the collection of any specific medication that the academy holds for pupils before the academy closes on Friday 20 March 2020.

Pupils in Receipt of Free School Meals

Whilst we await confirmation of the proposed voucher scheme for pupils and parents / carers that was announced by the Government, we will continue to provide food for Free School Meals children in the following way. In the first instance, from Monday 23 March to Wednesday 25 March we will provide a meal for collection from site for all FSM eligible pupils at 12.30 pm. Please contact the Academy at admin@horburyprimary.accordmat.org. If you are eligible but unable to collect from the Academy. Further information will be communicated next week.

Trips and Visits Refunds

Our Finance Team are now in the process of making the necessary arrangements to return all payments for Trips and Visits. Refunds are being processed at the time of writing this letter and we would wish all parents / carers to be in receipt of any refund this week. Where this is not the case our Finance team will still be operational next week with a view that all monies will be returned.

We are obviously keen to ensure that no monies are held by the academy at this time, however could I continue to ask parents / carers to remain patient in this respect.

Latest National Guidance

The latest national guidance and updates on Covid-19 can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

At this moment in time, there is no confirmation as to when the academy will be in a position to reopen for pupils and staff. Please rest assured that as soon as we do receive any information, we will be in touch to confirm the specific arrangements for pupils return.

In conclusion, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you in anticipation of your support in working with the academy over the period of closure. In what are unprecedented circumstances, we will continue to do all we can to ensure that our pupils continue to be supported in the provision of work, and that we maintain regular updates with you as parents and carers.

On behalf of staff, governors and Trustees, please ensure that you and your families all stay safe and well.

Sincerely,



Miss J K Tomlinson
Executive Principal