

Tuesday 17 March 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

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www.accordmat.org

### **COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus): Update for Parents, Carers and Pupils**

Firstly, and most importantly thank you for your support and co-operation in helping us to respond appropriately following the most recent updated guidance from the government yesterday afternoon. It is clear that we have been asked to remain open for pupils as part of a wider strategy to combat the virus, and as a Trust we will continue to do all that we can in that respect.

Both pupils and staff across the Trust have been outstanding in their approach to school today, demonstrating significant resilience and a wish to maintain business as usual where possible. Our plans for the forthcoming days are to continue as normal, however you will appreciate that we will need to review the situation for each academy on a daily basis, and act upon the daily advice from the government.

Leaders within the Trust are meeting on a daily basis in order to establish the current position, and to decide upon the most appropriate action for each academy and the Trust. With this in mind, I wanted all parents to be aware of the following information:

#### **Daily Communications**

*We will ensure that a daily communication is posted on each academy website before 8:00pm each evening.*

This will clearly set out the arrangements for the following day, and any specific details that we would wish parents to be aware of. Trust leaders are meeting at 5:00pm each day, and as such we are able to directly respond to the daily briefings from the government, taking the appropriate action to ensure the safety and well-being of both pupils and staff.

#### **Actions being taken as of Tuesday 17 March 2020**

In addition to measures already communicated relating to the importance of hygiene, each academy has taken the decision to implement the following measures updated on Tuesday 17 March 2020:

- Foreign trips and overnight visits scheduled to take place will be cancelled for the remainder of the academic year.
- All other UK trips and visits scheduled to take place will be cancelled up until Friday 1 May 2020 (or convened at an alternative time where appropriate).
- Sports fixtures scheduled to take place will be cancelled up until Friday 1 May 2020 (or postponed to a later date where applicable).

- Parents evenings, supporting success events, evening productions / performances and any other equivalent events will be cancelled up until Friday 1 May 2020 (or convened at an alternative time where appropriate).
- There will be no assemblies for pupils convened until further notice.
- Practical lessons involving the handling of food have been suspended until further notice.
- The use of biometric readers has been suspended at the tills in dining areas where applicable.
- Where necessary, academies will operate a partial opening for pupils where some pupils might be asked to remain at home. **Parents within the emergency services, particularly the NHS, and those whom require specific support in terms of supervision should feel free to continue to send pupils to the academy during periods of partial opening, regardless of year group.**

The above measures will remain under review, with any further decisions communicated to parents / carers for the period after 1 May 2020 as soon as possible based on the guidance available.

In setting out the actions above, there are clearly financial implications for parents / carers where monies have been paid for a range of planned trips and visits. The Trust will be working with our insurers the Risk Protection Agency (RPA) in seeking to recover monies paid. We will keep all parents / carers updated on progress as soon as possible, and would ask for your patience in this respect as there is likely to be a high volume of enquiries.

Should there be a forced closure, as a Trust we are working to ensure that we are able to continue to act on parent's behalf in seeking a refund of monies paid for the cancelled trips and visits.

#### **Planning for the Potential of a Directed School Closure**

As stated previously, the academy and Trust have plans in place to respond to the likelihood of a forced closure. These plans specifically include the following factors:

- Safe closure of the academy for pupils and staff.
- Appropriate opportunities for staff training in remote working.
- Securing clear channels of communication for parents / carers to and from the academy.
- The provision of work, both electronically and in hard copy format for pupils and families who do not have access to the internet and / or ICT devices. The expectation would be that all pupils work from home, with work provided by the academy.

It is also important to note that alongside other schools and Trusts, we are seeking to secure clarification on the government's intentions on how we continue to provide the important support for children and families in terms of free school meals.

Should there be a need to close an academy, we will ensure that any measures to be taken are communicated to parents / carers using the usual channels available. As a Trust it is our intention to secure remote working arrangements for all staff where appropriate.

#### **External Examinations and Testing for Pupils in Year 6, 10, 11 and 13**

At this moment in time there is no confirmation of any changes to the arrangements for examinations and external tests for pupils this summer. 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 should alternative arrangements be put in place. Any agreed alternatives will be accompanied by our commitment of extensive support as has been the case to date.

In the meantime, it is important that pupils take every opportunity to continue their preparations and to study from home at the point of an enforced academy closure.

**Latest National Guidance**

We would encourage all parents / carers to continue to familiarise yourselves with the latest national guidance. Updates from Monday 16 March 2020 on Covid-19 can be found at:

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

At no point have we ever experienced such a challenging situation for pupils, staff, parents / carers and our loved ones. This is clearly an unprecedented situation, and on behalf of the Trust I would like to ask all parents / carers for your ongoing co-operation and support to ensure the smooth running of our academies. Please rest assured that academy leaders will continue to respond to what is an ever-changing situation, ensuring that we keep you appropriately informed as soon as is possible.

Yours sincerely,



Alan Warboys  
Chief Executive Officer