

Our Ref: JAH/MM

19th March 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

COVID-19 Update

From Monday, 23rd March our schools – Blue Coat, St George’s and Mayfield will be open only to children of key workers, and to vulnerable children including those with an Education Health and Care Support Plan. Your school will inform you directly if this applies to you.

The current list of key workers will be issued by the Cabinet Office and sent to parents tomorrow.

The purpose of this letter is to start a regular electronic information–sharing with parents. It will be updated twice a week and more often, if necessary and will explain briefly what our schools are putting in place, how national policy is developing and crucially the information we will need from you, so that **together** we can look after our young people. **This is the absolute priority.** Schools will supplement the Trust update with their own specific information.

1. What will happen to pupils whose parents are not key workers and who are not in the “vulnerable” category

These young people will not be able to attend their school. The decision to partially close was taken to ensure that key workers on whom we all depend can continue, but otherwise children have to stay at home, to restrict the spread of the virus and to limit the demand on schools where staff are also having to self-isolate.

2. Will the children who are not in school be provided with resources to help them learn?

Yes – all our schools have already made plans for this, using the school’s VLEs (Bloodle for Blue Coat) and/or prepared packs of materials.

The closure could go on for some time, so our secondary school is training teachers to use Microsoft Teams, which pupils can access through their school email. This will enable the teacher to teach pupils in real time and interact with them. We hope to have this in place after Easter. We will be developing Microsoft Teams where we can for our primary pupils. More details to follow.

3. What will the provision be for children who are in school?

We have to be realistic. It won’t be the full National Curriculum. There are likely to be some mixed age groups. It will mirror the provision for children at home, with some project work and independent learning. We will make this interesting and enjoyable for pupils, so that their knowledge and skills continue to develop and they will have the social interaction of being with others.

4. **Where do children, who ARE attending, go on Monday?**

Pupils should follow their normal school procedure. Teachers will welcome and direct in our primaries. Secondary students should go to the school hall. All pupils must be in their school uniform, as normal.

5. **Will the school buses be running for Blue Coat?**

The companies have advised that at present, they are intending to run their services. Please warn pupils that the normal crossing patrol may not be available.

6. **What about pupils who were meant to be doing public exams this summer?**

SATs, GCSEs and A levels have been cancelled. Young people who have been working hard for months and years are upset and angry but given that the peak of the virus is projected to be in the middle of the exam season, i.e. May-June, running any public examinations would be impossible and unfair.

The information that we have **now** (though more to follow) is that young people will be awarded grades based on moderated teacher assessment. This means that teacher assessment will be checked, to ensure it is fair and consistent. Quite how this will be done is not yet clear **BUT...and this is the crucial bit.....teacher assessment will be based on students' work which will continue as they are working from home.**

Our students are quite devastated at the moment but we all have to help them work through this, vent as necessary and get back on to it.

Their continued work and application will mean that their school has robust data to support the assessment which will be made.

Please do your best to buoy pupils up, encourage them and keep them going and engaged and their schools and teachers will support them throughout to make sure that they get what they need, and do well, and feel that they have fully achieved.

And also

SATs, GCSEs and A-Levels are important rites of passage that mark the end of one phase of education and life and the start of another. There will be a feeling of loss, of missing out on something important, maybe not seeing one another again.

We are therefore going to calendar dates in late June, just after GCSE and A-Levels would have ended and after the projected peak of the virus as celebrations for the students in these key years. They will celebrate in different ways. They will all have a special learners' assembly. Year 11s traditionally bring in a shirt for their teachers and friends to sign. They keep them for years. Both Years 11 and 13 have booked a prom. We are telling students that a celebration will happen. We may have to move the date and it might be slightly different, but we will mark the end of this special year in a special way.

7. **What about pupils coming up to their final year, i.e. the Year 5s, 10s,12s**

The young people in these year groups could lose a term of education. There will be a lot to catch up on when normality returns in the next school year. So our schools will focus on keeping those youngsters going so big gaps don't develop. They will communicate with you as parents if they believe your son/daughter isn't engaging with them. Please do your best to make sure that they have a routine at home which includes a couple of hours morning and afternoon for school work. It will be varied and will include some independent study – bear in mind that teachers are remote-teaching for a lot of young people and looking



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after those who attend and covering for colleagues who might be ill, so we all need to be reasonable in our expectations.

8. **Based on the Cabinet's definition...I am a key worker...what do I do?**

Schools are staying open to ensure that key workers can get to work knowing their children are safe. Parents of older pupils and especially those who have a long journey may decide that their sons/daughters will work from home. That is up to you. The key is that the school **knows** which children will be attending, so they can plan.

Please complete the electronic return if your child will be attending because you are a key worker and return to your school **tomorrow**, Friday, 20th March.

9. **What will happen to Free School Meals?**

Individual arrangements have been put in place for each school. Details will follow on Friday and Monday.

10. **Meals for pupils attending school**

Where pupils are entitled to Free School Meals and are attending school, they will get their meal at school. Other pupils can pay for their as normal or bring a packed lunch.

Again, we have to ask parents to bear in mind that schools meals staff in each school are also under pressure, and that the numbers of pupils attending will restrict what can be offered. Therefore, the choice may be limited.

11. **What will happen over the Easter holidays?**

As yet, this is unclear. Further details will follow.

Conclusion: Key Actions

- Please let your school know if you are a key worker and therefore your child will be attending school by completing and returning the form we will send out.
- Please work with the school if you are contacted and advised that we would really like your child to be in school so that we can best support them.
- Please follow our communication via our websites, MyEd, Twitter and school Facebook etc. We will update you regularly.
- Our joint priority is our children and young people. We put them first and give them all the support and care we can in these difficult and uncertain times – however uncertain and worried we may feel, **this will pass**.

We are a Christian trust that welcomes children of all faiths and denominations and none. In all our schools we have a Bible verse for the year – the same one – which we explore in different ways in school assemblies and worship.

The verse for 2019-20 is from St Peter's first letter, 5:7

“Give all your worries to him because he cares about you”.



We invite children and young people to trust God with their worries and fears, because he has given strength and hope for generation on generation and his love endures forever.

Parents and carers may find this helpful as well.

Yours sincerely



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CEO
The Cranmer Education Trust

