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Headteacher

# The West Bridgford School

Friday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

As you can no doubt imagine the main topic of conversation in the school corridors over the past week has been the Covid-19 Coronavirus. After last night's latest recommendations from the government I felt it was appropriate to communicate how we have been preparing to face the challenges that may arise in the coming weeks. If schools are forced to close, then it will present challenges to the country as well as to individuals and families. Please be reassured that we fully understand that during any closure, it will be our responsibility to ensure that we do what is in our power to continue to provide a service to our community; and to ensure that there is minimum disruption to students' education.

As a school our primary sources of advice are the Department for Education and Public Health England and we have continued to act on this advice as it has been released. Daily school life has continued as normally as possible, with no pupil currently waiting for a test result or self-isolating as a result of waiting for a test.

## **NEW ADVICE FROM GOVERNMENT – SHOULD MY CHILD BE IN SCHOOL?**

New Government advice was released last night, which may impact on your decision as to whether to send your child to school. This is:

**Stay at home if you have coronavirus symptoms**

**Stay at home for 7 days if you have either:**

- a high temperature
- a new continuous cough

As we are midway through the 'normal' cold season, as well as the Covid-19 virus, this may result in a large number of pupils having to self-isolate. If your child has to remain off school due to meeting these criteria, please let us know via the normal school channels. (*Phoning in or online at [www.wbs.school](http://www.wbs.school) >> [Contact Us](#) >> [Report Absence](#)*).

## **THE POSSIBILITY OF SCHOOL CLOSURE**

School closure is never an easy decision to make. If such a decision has to be made, I am sure that all parents will understand that our priority has to be students who are preparing for exams. Therefore, our plans have been centred on prioritising these students and ensuring that teachers have the capacity during a school closure to put in place the education they will need to enable them to continue to prepare for summer exams. Putting this in place successfully for exam groups will take a disproportionate amount of time for teachers and this is why we are taking differing approaches to year groups when setting work across the school.

A **first scenario** we may face is if a substantial number of staff are taken ill, this may impact on our ability to run a full school timetable. In this scenario we would focus our available staff on examination groups as well as Year 7 to minimise the impact on parental childcare needs. *Year 8 and/or 9 may be asked to stay at home.* As our capacity to run the school will be challenged, we will not initially set any online work for these students. We will communicate

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with parents and students via parent email, student email, Twitter and Brightspace to give as much warning as possible.

The **second scenario** we may face is the government instructing us to close. If this occurs, we will support our students remotely. On the first day of the closure teachers will need a little 'transition time' to prepare work, however on the second day after closure online lessons for Year 11 and 13 will restart online. We have made extensive plans to ensure Year 11 and Year 13 (and a small number of Year 12 in specific subjects), will be able to continue lessons at home. Brightspace, our online learning platform will be used to deliver, live, online lessons to pupils, and allow work to be submitted for feedback. Students can attend their lessons on computers, tablets or smartphones. They can then replay any lesson later on for review. I would like to emphasize several points around the use of the online lesson technology:

- All lessons planned for the day can be seen in the normal Brightspace Calendar. Pupils will have to choose their own class and teacher from the list.
- Please ensure that all Webcams are off.
- Pupils will need to mute their microphones unless they are asking or answering a question.
- All written comments should be written in a professional way that could be shared with parents and carers
- If pupils do not follow the code of conduct the teacher may remove you from the session and you will need to access the recording after the lesson.
- All lessons will be recorded. This means that after watching the lesson pupils will be able to go back and re-watch specific parts of the lessons again. It also means all comments left in the chat area, including private chats, with pupil's usernames attached to each specific comment, will be recorded. Please remind your children of this and the repercussions of leaving inappropriate comments.
- Year 12 who are not preparing for exams in the summer will receive homework via Brightspace in the normal manner.

#### **EXAM SEASON**

Pupils have communicated their considerable anxiety to us around the coming examination season. We are closely monitoring Ofqual, the examinations regulator, to ensure we are aware of any contingency plans or changes to examination regulations or dates that are put into place. We will communicate these to parents and students as soon as we are aware of them, however at present the message is to prepare for examinations as normal, and to anticipate that exams will take place on their normal advertised dates.

#### **SCHOOL TRIPS**

Parents may be aware that we have had to cancel several impending international trips. This aligns with the advice from government, issued last night that foreign trips are 'not advised'. School trips within the UK are being considered for risk, particularly when a school trip would involve meeting/being around large groups of new people. Each trip's risk assessment will be considered individually before making a decision on it going ahead.

This is an unprecedented situation in my career, but we will continue to do all we can to carry on as normally as possible. Hopefully we can continue to adapt our daily practice to help slow the spread of the virus and the school won't close. If we are forced to close, new technology will allow us to support as many students as possible. While the school remains open our wonderful pastoral staff will continue to support our student's mental health and well-being. Above all I will regularly communicate with you to ensure we can work together as a community to help our young people through this challenging time.

Regards

**Tim Peacock**

*Headteacher*

*The West Bridgford School*