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The West Bridgford School

Friday 13th March 2020

Dear 'Pupil of West Bridgford School',

As you can no doubt imagine the main topic of conversation I've been hearing 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. However, the school has been making plans over the past week and I felt it was now time to share these with you.

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.

SHOULD I BE IN SCHOOL?

New advice from Government was released last night which may impact on your ability to attend school.

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 number of pupils having to self-isolate. West Bridgford School pupils are highly motivated and want to do their best. I often see pupils who have struggled into school when feeling unwell because they don't like missing their lessons. However, during this period if you are exhibiting the symptoms described have an open conversation with your parents and follow the advice in an appropriate manner.

THE POSSIBILITY OF SCHOOL CLOSURE

School closure is never an easy decision to make. I am sure that you as students, will understand that our priority has to be your peers who are preparing for exams in the summer. 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 will be 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 your parent's childcare needs. *Thus Year 8 and/or 9 may be asked to stay at home.* The **second scenario** we may face is the government instructing us to close. If this occurs it will be due to an order by the government and will impact on all students of your age across the country. On the first day of the closure teachers will need a little 'transition time' to prepare their online workspaces, however on the second day after

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closure, your lessons will restart online. In this situation it is best to access Brightspace via a laptop or PC, however tablets and smartphones do give a very good experience still.

Year 11 and 13 - 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, with their teachers online. Brightspace, our online learning platform will be used to deliver, live, online lessons to you, and allow work to be submitted for feedback. These lessons will be able to be viewed on computers, tablets or smartphones, and replayed as video's. Further details of this will be found on the front page of Brightspace if we close. However, I would like to emphasize several points around the use of the online lesson technology:

- All lessons planned for the day will be viewable in the normal Brightspace Calendar. Lessons will take place during the normal 'School Day' times. You will be able to see ALL of the available video lessons in your calendar, so you will have to choose your own class and teacher from the list.
- Please ensure that all Webcams are off.
- You will need to mute your microphones unless you are asking or answering a question. The teacher will specifically ask you to verbally answer a question if needed.
- All written comments should be written in a professional way that could be shared with parents and carers.
- If you 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 you 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.
- Year 12 who DON'T have a specific exam in the summer will have their work set as 'homework' in the normal Brightspace fashion.

The technology available will allow us to continue to provide a high-quality teaching experience for our target groups. However, this is your education and you need to take responsibility for completing the work set for you by your teachers. It is really important that you try and keep some structure in your day, working in 1 hour slots and following your usual timetable pattern. Even try to have breaks and lunch in the usual slots. It will allow you to cope with the changes more easily.

EXAMS 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 your mental health and well-being. Above all I will communicate with you as often as possible to ensure we can work together as a community to get us through this challenging time.

Kind Regards



Mr T Peacock
Headteacher