



Dear Parents/Carers

## Update: School Closure

Following Wednesday's announcement by the government about school closures, I wanted to update you regarding our plans to date.

Following government advice, if it is at all possible for children to be at home, then they should be. Taking up a place at school during this time of wider closure is the offer of last resort, for the minority of frontline workers, who have no alternative. However, we plan to be open from the week commencing 23<sup>rd</sup> March between 9.00am and 3.00pm Monday to Friday to support, if necessary, the following groups of students:

- Those whose parents/carers are frontline workers.
- Our vulnerable students as described by the Secretary of State – these are students who have an EHCP and those supported by Social Services.

We will have limited availability to support children whose parents/carers are critical to the Covid-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home. If workers think they fall within the critical categories they should confirm with their employer that, based on their business continuity arrangements, their specific role is necessary for the continuation of this essential public service. We hope you understand that our service is reliant on us being able to provide staff to supervise the students safely. Therefore, we kindly ask that if you do not need our support with child care that students study independently at home or alternative child care arrangements are made.

We will do our best to remain open, to include throughout the Easter holidays if required. We would like everyone to enter the school building via Main Reception. Students will be expected to use the provided hand sanitiser before going to the Sp4L to be registered. We do not expect students to wear their school uniform however, they do need to come ready to learn to include a silent reading book and a fully equipped pencil case to prevent the sharing of equipment. Normal school rules will apply, including expectations of behaviour whilst on site.

We will be ensuring students who attend are cared for however, I do have to emphasise that our provision will not mirror the normal Mark Rutherford School experience. Supervision will be by teachers and cover supervisors with students completing the same work that has been assigned to students who are studying at home via our e-learning platforms. We will not have the capacity to follow traditional lessons and the government has stated that the usual curriculum offer will not be in place.

There will be a skeleton canteen service consisting of cold food only. This will only be available for students who are coming into school because they fall into the two groups outlined above. In addition, if they are not free school meal students then they will need to purchase the food they require. Alternatively, students can bring in their own packed lunch.

We kindly ask that students aim to provide their own hand sanitiser and we will be enforcing the government's recommendations regarding social distancing between both students and staff to aim to safeguard the health of everyone on site.

Students who do not fall into the two groups above should remain at home with the appropriate care. Teachers have been working hard to prepare work for students to complete at home for the next two weeks in the first instance. We have asked teachers to ensure there is enough work for the number of teaching hours they would have had with your

child. Work will be available via itslearning and/or epraise and we have ensured this week that students can access these e-learning platforms. If required, this provision will continue after the two weeks Easter holiday.

Submission of students' work should be via the itslearning platform where possible. Alternatively students can save this and we will collate their work on our return. If students have issues with passwords then they can email the following addresses and they will be reset as soon as possible:

itslearning : [ItsLearningPwdRst@mrus.co.uk](mailto:ItsLearningPwdRst@mrus.co.uk)

epraise: [ePraisePwdRst@mrus.co.uk](mailto:ePraisePwdRst@mrus.co.uk)

GCSEPod: [GCSEPodPwdRst@mrus.co.uk](mailto:GCSEPodPwdRst@mrus.co.uk)

If a student requires support with itslearning whilst studying at home then they need to email the itslearning address above and a member of staff will aim to answer any queries you have as soon as possible.

Just yesterday the government identified arrangements for students eligible for free school meals, and we are still working on our plan for this. If your son/daughter is eligible for free school meals then we will be in contact with you direct as soon as possible to communicate how we can support you with accessing this provision.

We fully recognise that the government's announcement regarding GCSE and A Level exams has come as a real shock. Students have worked hard in order to be prepared and therefore we understand the range of emotions they may currently be feeling. The government will make an announcement today regarding how grades are going to be awarded and as soon as we are able to communicate this information to you we will. We have advised students to continue to study and meet coursework or NEA deadlines where their subjects require. It also means the students have not left with the usual rites of passage with a year group photo, shirt signing or a leavers' assembly. We will look to work out a possible plan going forwards for this when things become clearer for all schools, and this will include arrangements for the Year 11 Prom and the Year 13 Valedictory Ball.

Our staff have worked tirelessly this week to ensure our school has stayed open. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their support, flexibility and commitment which will continue for the foreseeable future.

The situation is moving fast and is subject to change however, we will keep you informed and updated as and when we can.

Thank you for your continued support in such challenging times and please look after each other until we see some normality resume.

Kind regards,



Mrs K Foster  
Acting Headteacher