

Dear Parents and Carers

Coronavirus update 13 March 2020

We continue to monitor the constantly-changing situation around Coronavirus. As things stand, the school will remain open and thank you very much to you all for your support at this challenging time.

The key points from yesterday's announcements from the Prime Minister that will affect the school are

1. The need for people to self-isolate for 7 days if they have new symptoms (a continuous dry cough and/or a high temperature) and
2. The advice that foreign trips organised by the school should not go ahead at this time

Looking ahead, the number of Hinchingsbrooke staff that need to self-isolate at any time will, clearly, affect our ability to run the school. In the situation where a significant number of staff are absent, we will consider large group teaching in large spaces in the school and we will also consider partial closure and even full closure (by partial closure, we mean sending 1 or more year groups home to enable us to carry on with fewer year groups; we would be more likely to send Year 10 and 12 students home than Year 7, 11 and 13). This is a decision that we anticipate having to make on a daily basis for the foreseeable future and the current plan is that senior staff will meet at 7.30am each morning in order to understand how the staffing situation is looking for the day. We will give you as much warning as possible of a partial or full closure and should that happen, we will keep you updated very regularly (at least once every day) by Parentmail and by posting a message on the front page of the school website. I would like to stress that closure, whether partial or full, will be a last resort, in the situation where we believe we cannot safely open the school or fully open it due to a shortage of staff.

In terms of other activities organised by the school, such as parents evenings, shows/concerts and local trips, our current policy is to run these if we possibly can, but we will have to look at each one as it approaches – this is especially important in the context that things can change at any time. The exception to this is that the school trips scheduled for the Easter holiday to the U.S.A. and Holland definitely cannot now go ahead at that time; we are looking to see whether these can be re-scheduled for a future date and will contact all families affected separately about this.

Looking further ahead to the public examinations (GCSEs, BTECs, A Levels etc...), at the moment these remain scheduled to happen but please be reassured that should that situation change, in the UK examination system the priority is that any candidate should not be negatively affected.

Although we are not at that point, we have made plans for continuing to provide work for students to do, should they have to work from home for a period of time. This will mainly involve teachers providing work on the school's online system, 'Doddle', that students would be expected to complete each day.

Should any parent need to report their child's absence due to self-isolation, please make this clear when you ring the school's absence line.

Coronavirus updates are likely to become more regular; we will send these as Parentmails and also post a copy on the school's website. Once again, thank you very much for your support.

Kind regards

Mark Patterson
Principal