



19 March 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

Following my last communication with you, I can now confirm that the Secretary of State announced to Parliament yesterday evening that, after schools close on Friday, they will not open again in the same capacity until further notice.

School staff have been planning for school closure to a great degree but yesterday's announcement means we are entering uncharted territory. Many of our students will be struggling with the closure of their school. For many of them, Cotham is a place where they have been supported to excel in academic, sporting or creative endeavours, a place to make friends and have fun but for others it is more importantly a place that provides refuge, stability, routine and comfort. These are our students, wonderful in their diversity and complexity but also vulnerable. We will do whatever we can to educate and look after them in these difficult circumstances and to support you. However, the hard facts of the matter are that their education will not look anything like what it has for the foreseeable future.

Below I have laid out what I know at this time. I will provide more detailed updates as soon as possible. However, there will be many unanswered questions and uncertainty over the coming days and I must wait for further direction from the Secretary of State to answer them for you.

Key Headlines from the Secretary of State's Statement

Schools closed from Monday until further notice except to:

- Children of frontline workers
- "The most vulnerable children" – includes those with a social worker order and those with EHCPs.

Schools should be open to those children – including during the Easter holidays

- *There will be no GCSE or A Level exams, but the Government is working with Ofqual to ensure students will receive their qualifications.
- Free School Meals should continue to be available – any costs to be reimbursed. To be replaced with a National Voucher System.
- Ofsted remains suspended
- No national Performance Tables this year
- Additional resources for education will be made available through the BBC and others

*Currently it seems that exams will be awarded on the basis of moderated assessment with the exam boards and Ofqual – essentially on the basis of predicted grades. I will keep you updated on this when Ofqual makes the system for moderation and collection of expected grades clear.

Revised Plans for Today- Thursday 19 March

The closure of our school will be incredibly destabilising for all our students but particularly for those in Year 11 and Year 13 who have worked so hard to prepare for their exams. We will therefore be doing the following:



Year 13

I feel it is important to speak to students collectively, to provide as much reassurance as we can and try and answer any questions they might have and we will do this. We will hold an assembly this morning for Year 13 to explain what we know already but also what we do not know and we will keep them updated.

There will be immediate pastoral support and care available for those students who need it.

The rest of the morning is a little unclear at the moment as we need to liaise with RGS on arrangements for students at both Learning Communities. We'll update you as soon as possible but it is very likely that students will leave the school before the end of the school day.

Year 11

Again, I feel it is important that staff speak to students collectively, to provide as much reassurance as we can and try and answer any questions they might have. We will hold an assembly this morning for Year 11 to explain what we know already but also what we do not know and we will keep them updated.

There will be immediate pastoral support and care available for those students who need it.

We will then be asking Year 11 to leave the site at around 9.30am to enable staff to continue planning resources for distance learning.

We will be providing food for those who need it.

Year 7

We will endeavour to make their day as useful, informative and supportive for them as possible. We will ensure a balance of education and fun and will provide time for them to practice using Google Classroom and to try out E Learning websites to support their distance learning.

Tomorrow Friday 20 March 2020

There will be a further update on tomorrow as soon as we can provide it.

With thanks all for your support and the kindness you have shown towards me and our staff in this most challenging time. It is so important that we all look out for and after each other at this time of crisis.

With very best wishes

Yours faithfully

**Ms Jo Butler
(Headteacher)**