

Monday 16th March 2020 - 5.40pm

Dear Parents and Carers,

With coronavirus and COVID-19 becoming an increasing issue in day to day life I wanted to write to you to update you on our plans to reduce the impact of coronavirus on our Academy community. This includes how we intend to communicate with you, what will happen if the Academy needs to close in the next month and how we can help you if you are experiencing hardship because of the current situation.

At the moment there is no indication that we will need to fully close, however the situation is changing all the time. As of writing, we have eight staff self isolating for the next two weeks. Normally the Academy can cope with this level of staff absence but, today we have been unable to get any external cover staff from our supply agencies and only just managed to cover lessons by using staff who were supposed to teach year 13 today (year 13 are currently in mock exams so their learning was not affected. From Tuesday year 12 will only need to be in lessons so that we can use year 12 staff to cover lessons too. This will only last until the end of mock exams on Friday).

As outlined below, I have already made a number of changes to ensure teachers are able to deliver their core teaching in the classroom. This includes cancelling trips and visits and suspending all clubs and interventions after school until Easter. The Academy will close promptly at 3.35pm (except Wednesdays which will continue to have a 2.35pm finish). Detentions will still take place. If this pattern of staff absence continues, we will need to partially close for certain year groups.

We also need you to work with us. Today we have sent home a number of students who either had a persistent cough and/or temperature or had been ill over the weekend. We also have students who had symptoms on Friday and have been sent in for exams today when they should be self isolating for 14 days (guidance changed this evening). In order to protect themselves and the rest of our community, they should not have been sent in today.

I realise that school attendance is important and making alternative childcare arrangements may be difficult, but we need to ensure that we protect the Academy community from infection and self isolate, even if the symptoms are mild. If your son or daughter has been sent home or has symptoms then they must stay off for **14 days and remain at home with you (guidance from PHE at 17.15 on Monday 16th March has changed self isolation from 7 days to 14 days)**, we will track this and send them home immediately if you try and send them into the Academy before this.

Below is some key information for you.

How we will communicate with you.

- We will use our twitter feed @chelseaacademy and website to communicate with parents about any closure, part closure or to share urgent news.
- As mentioned, if our staff and their families need to self isolate, we may need to partially close. This will mean only certain year groups are allowed on site.

- Any partial or full closure information will be communicated by 7.45am via Twitter and the website.
- We will also try and use text messaging to communicate with you. However, this may not be possible for early morning texts due to the working patterns of our admin staff.

What we are doing now

- Currently, as of writing, it is business as usual. We are working as a staff body to prepare lessons and work packs if they are needed but are 'keeping calm and carrying on'.
- Teenagers need stability and a routine and, especially in these uncertain times, school and the routine it brings are really important. We will offer support where needed but will carry on as normal for as long as we can.
- We are ensuring that classrooms are cleaned regularly and surfaces disinfected. Bathrooms are being cleaned throughout the day and well stocked with soap for handwashing.
- Hand sanitiser is available across the site for students to use and at the start of break and lunch time.
- We have stopped all trips and visits and planned staff training from today. This is to ensure that all staff and students are in school, teaching and learning together.
- No trips abroad will be allowed until the end of the academic year (this does not affect the ski trip next year).
- Mock exams for year 12 and 13 will continue as normal.

Setting of work for individuals whilst the Academy remains open

- Whilst the Academy is fully open we will not be able to set work for individual students, please do not email and request this.
- Year 7 and 8 students have access to all the curriculum learning areas and 'i can' statements on the Academy website.
- Year 10, 11, 12 and 13 students have access to the GCSE syllabus online and either online or textbook-based resources.
- We have subscribed to SAM learning, GCSE Pod and other online tools that students can use. Links to these are on a twitter post from earlier today.

What we will do if we need to close or part close

- Due to staffing numbers It may be necessary to close or part close the Academy.
- If we need to do this we will communicate on twitter and the website by 7.45am.
- We will prioritise year 11 and 13 followed by year 7 and 12.
- If we partially close, work will be set for students to complete at home. This will be set on [Smarthomework](#) so you can track what is being set.
- If we have to close fully, for the first seven days work will be set this way.
- We will also start to offer online teaching. This will be through either recorded lessons using google meet or providing video explanations and work using the CALC.
- **Please can I ask that if you do not have internet access or a laptop or tablet, you let your son or daughter's Head of Year know.** This will allow us to ensure that all students have access to an adequate supply of work.

- If we do have to close for a longer period of time than a week or two we will send guidance on how to help your son or daughter revise at home.

If you are suffering hardship

- We realise that coronavirus is having an unprecedented impact on people's lives and may be causing financial stress. Whilst the Academy, like most schools, is operating under tight budget constraints, we still aim to do everything we can to help if you are struggling.
- Through the CAF and our local churches we have access to support that may help you through the times ahead. This includes help with buying food, paying for essential bills and also just being here to listen.
- If you need support please don't hesitate to get in touch with your son or daughter's Head of Year - we will do everything within our power to help if we can.

Whilst I realise that we are in uncertain times it is important that we all follow the guidance from the government. We will be increasing the hygiene posters in school and sharing information about frequent handwashing and keeping safe, during coaching time. We would ask that any stress and concern that you are feeling is, as much as possible, not passed onto your son or daughter. Young people are very perceptive and they will pick up on any anxiety you may have.

Finally, I would like to make a plea for everyone in our community to show compassion to each other. I am fortunate to lead an amazing group of staff who will do everything they can to help and support you and your families. Please remember that they are doing their best for over a thousand young people, and also have families and friends that they are concerned about. At this stressful time I would be grateful if you could take a moment to ensure that when you communicate with my staff you are doing so in a collaborative and compassionate way; we are all in this together.

I hope the information above helps you understand our position and next steps if the situation escalates further.

Yours sincerely



Mr M Williams
Principal