

12 March 2020

To: Parents/Guardians
Merchant Taylors' Schools

Dear Parents/Guardians

We are continuing to monitor the outbreak of the COVID-19 Coronavirus and its potential impact on our students and the wider school.

We would reiterate that we are not currently aware of any pupil, parent, teacher or any other member of the School Community who has been diagnosed with the virus.

While we continue to take all reasonable steps to ensure this remains the case, we must also make contingency plans in the event that the situation changes. We must also recognise that some people will be required to self-isolate as a precaution. If this is the case, we will ensure that schoolwork is provided via Firefly or via packs sent home for younger children whilst self-isolation is being undertaken.

A summary of those contingency plans is detailed below.

If a member of the School Community is confirmed as being infected with coronavirus

If we receive confirmation that a member of our School Community has been infected with coronavirus, we will contact Public Health England. They will connect us to a Health Protection Team, which in turn will investigate and assess the case and advise on the necessary actions to be taken by both the individual and the school.

If there is a confirmed case, a risk assessment will be undertaken by us with advice from the Health Protection Team. In most cases, closure of the school will be unnecessary, but this will be a local decision specific to the school and the circumstances of the case.

We will take a decision about whether or not to close after consultation with Public Health England and the Health Protection Team. The Executive Team and the Chair of Governors will make this decision and inform the community according to the following guidelines.

If the school takes the decision to close

Please note that if the decision is taken to close one of the school sites, then all school sites will close. This is in recognition that many pupils have siblings and parents across the school, while many pupils travel together on school transport and there is a risk of cross infection.

1. Parents will be informed of the decision via email and the Merchant Taylors' website. You will be able to collect children from school once the decision has been announced. For those unable to do so, normal school transport will run at the end of the day.
2. Pupils will be informed of the decision to close and of the expectation that they will remain in touch with their teachers via Firefly and email.
3. Work will be set via Firefly in line with the normal timetable and pupils should expect to submit it to their teachers for checking, marking and feedback. For younger pupils work can be scanned and returned to teachers via email.

Throughout the coronavirus outbreak, the school will remain alert for changes in Government advice and will keep staff, parents and pupils informed about updates or any possible school closures. This will take place via email and the Merchant Taylors' website.



External Examinations

We have a contingency policy outlining the procedures to be followed if external examinations are disrupted at one or other of the senior schools.

Alternative venues for examinations are being investigated so that they can continue as normally as possible. We will follow procedures for disrupted examinations laid down by OFQUAL, with whom we will continue to consult for advice.

The latest advice from OFQUAL (6.3.2020) is that schools and pupils should continue to prepare for exams and other assessments as normal.

School Trips, Fixtures and Events

If the school is closed in response to a confirmed case of coronavirus amongst the community, all school trips, sports fixtures and other events will be postponed or cancelled.

Even if school remains open, plans for travel to overseas destinations will be guided and informed by travel advice issued by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and individual tour companies.

If a decision is taken to cancel an overseas visit, this will be communicated to parents and pupils as soon as possible and we will work with tour companies to try to find alternative dates and/or possible alternative destinations.

Reopening the school following closure

If school has closed in response to a confirmed case of Coronavirus amongst its community, it is likely there will be a need for a "deep clean" of certain areas of the site, as per Government advice.

We will remain in regular contact with parents and staff and will endeavor to reopen the school as soon as it practical and safe to do so.

Yours faithfully

The Executive Management Team



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