



19 March 2020

Dear Parents/Carers and Students

By now, you may have seen the announcement from the Secretary of State (SoS) for Education regarding GCSE and A Level exams and school closures. Please take the time to read this email through with your child as soon as you can.

Exams

GCSE and A Level exams will not take place this year. Whilst I appreciate this will come as a massive shock, I want to reassure students that we had anticipated this and all is by no means lost. The headline will be “exams cancelled”, but there are three other critical elements to it which I would urge all students to note:

1. “Recognition”: The SoS promised clearly that all students in Year 11 and Year 13 will receive the recognition they deserve for their hard work, and qualifications will be awarded. This suggests some sort of teacher assessment, based on predicted grades, although to be clear I do not know what this is yet and we will have to wait for more information.
2. “Progression”: The SoS said clearly that “no student should pause their ambitions” to progress to Sixth Form or University next year. Schools and Universities will adjust, and work off the new system that is in place.
3. “Fairness and Appeals”: As students will not have the ability to sit an exam, and qualifications will be awarded via some other mechanism, the SoS was clear that this will be done fairly and that parents and students will be able to appeal this, if they feel the eventual award has not been fair.

I appreciate this will be an emotional time, but we will support your children, and they should take comfort from the fact that we are here for them and all students in UK are in the same position. Staff will hold onto evidence that would support the awarding of grades to students and any coursework modules completed by students, we anticipate may be used to support the Award. If we request any information or work from home please can you support us as the request will be made in the best interest of our children?

These are unprecedented times, and the government has asked for a “war time” effort. Year 11 and Year 13 are now at the front of that, in having to adjust. Tonight they will be shocked, in the coming days they will absorb this, and over the long term they will be fine, we can promise you that.

General Update

Tomorrow we will be partially open due to staffing constraints.

Schools will be closed from Friday afternoon, however we will remain open for “vulnerable students” (those with a social worker involved with the family); “EHP students” and students of “key workers” (nurses, doctors, police, social workers etc.). If you feel your child falls into this category please email info@epschool.org and complete the table of information sent out earlier this is so we can plan for partial opening next week.



We will be in touch with any student we think falls into this category ourselves and are awaiting an update from the LA and coordination from Social Services. **If you have made alternative arrangements to support your child please could you inform us as we have to plan activities and rooms to accommodate children from Monday 23 March.**

Once the list is compiled we will email these parents arrangements for Monday's opening so they can discuss with their children what is needed. Our attendance team will be operating and should your child be unwell you are asked to report their absence following normal school processes.

All other students will be following a curriculum, which we will deliver through paper based or shared resources via our Google environment and or ClassCharts as previously communicated. Staff will not be expected to contact you over social media as this is not part of our safeguarding protocols so please use the EPCS parents group to ask questions. With limited staff and resources I will do my best to answer them.

Any student who qualifies for Free School Meals will be issued with a means to purchase food from Sainsbury's until Government takes this requirement over from schools. We will set a system up for this, but people should not worry. My personal thanks to our School Business Manager who has found a mechanism to offer support to our vulnerable families.

If your child is healthy (no sustained cough or high temperature), and everyone at home is healthy, and in the designated year groups they should come to school tomorrow. We can talk to them, explain what has happened, and try to motivate them about the coming months. The children are very much in my staffs' thoughts and the positive relationships we have with them mean, we like them, are processing the upset and uncertainty this decision will cause.

Year group arrangements are as follows Friday 20 March 2020

Year 7 not in as they will have had work sent home today and a special assembly to thank them for their achievements so far and to share any concerns they might have.

They were brilliant and I will miss them deeply.

Year 8, 9 and 10 are to attend school to receive work and an update on arrangements. They will not leave school early.

Year 11 attend at 9.00am Roll Call for a Leavers Assembly and shirt signing leaving site at 11.30am. Please note children already self-isolating may not attend this event. Year 11 will have the opportunity to purchase food and then be asked to leave site by 11.30am.

Year 12 students are expected in school tomorrow, Prep 1 2 and 3 will run as normal as well as the first half of period 4. Students will have an assembly at 2.30pm and will then be dismissed. This applies to all students A Level and Read to Work.

Year 13 attend school at 10.00am in time for their leaver's assembly at 10.00am – individual working arrangements with subject staff apply but they may leave site when this is completed.

Yours faithfully



Liz Cook
Headteacher

cc. All Year 11 and Year 13 Students