



Spalding High School

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Headmistress Mrs M Anderson B.Ed

19th March 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

As you are aware from yesterday's letter, schools in England will close to most (not all) students with effect from tomorrow afternoon.

Exceptions to this closure were given:

- a) Children of key workers e.g. NHS, Police, Fire and Prison services, teachers, social care, delivery services. We are still waiting to hear from the Government as to the nature of the jobs listed but assume it will cover emergency and public services and those in the distribution industry.
- b) Vulnerable children e.g. those with social workers, Free School Meals and Educational Health Care Plans (EHCPs).

Key workers:

As per my letter of 18.3.20, there will be supervision of students attending school in one group so that all students are together. There will not be separate lessons taught and the normal curriculum will be suspended. Students will be expected to work on the tasks we have set the whole school to do at home. Students attending need to be in uniform and use the front reception door and attend for normal hours. They will not be permitted off site during the day.

At present, we have not been told whether the Local Authority school buses are operational or not.

Due to safeguarding provisions, parents/students will not be able to "dip in and out" on a daily or weekly basis. We expect that parents will sign their child up for school supervision for a fortnight at a time. The first fortnight of provision will operate from Monday 23rd March until Thursday 2nd April and parents should notify the school by letter or email no later than lunchtime on Friday 20th March. There will be first day call back if the child listed on the temporary register does not attend.

Vulnerable children and those with Education Health Care Plans:

The Pastoral Team are in the process of contacting students and parents directly to assist with support and provision for students during the period of school closure.

Free School Meals:

We have received no guidance as yet from the Government as to how the voucher system announced yesterday will operate. In light of this, we have begun to make our own arrangements for vouchers to be made available for those eligible for free school meals. Mr Blackburn will be writing directly to parents/students tomorrow.

Work during the first fortnight cycle of school closure (23rd March – 2nd April):

As notified a number of times, this will be posted on the school website with effect from tomorrow afternoon. Students in school will receive a printed version to take home with them tomorrow along with all their books and equipment from their lockers. Students should leave no books, equipment and kit at school.

Staff have been talking students through home working and establishing means of communication with their classes through either the school email system or VLE. Staff will be checking their emails daily (as should students) and we are there to support their learning for the duration of the closure.

Work will not be set for students during the Easter holidays. Enjoy whatever kind of holiday you can and have a rest!

Work for the second and subsequent fortnightly cycles:

Teachers have established email groups with their classes and in Years 10-13 are likely to be communicating the next batches of work with them more directly. We will continue to publish year group work for Y7-9 on the school website for you to download a few days ahead of each new cycle starting.

Exam groups:

Yesterday's press conferences and press releases by the Prime Minister, Education Secretary and Ofqual gave subtly different messages and sadly did little to provide clarity for our examination groups. The Prime Minister's announcement that exams would not take place in May and June gave us all a glimmer of hope that we might be looking at delay rather than cancellation. Today we appear to know at least that there will not be actual exams but have been given absolutely no indication as to how students will be assessed, what will be used to inform these judgements and what the process will look like.

The decision to cancel the exams for Y11 and Y13 will understandably cause upset and worry. Our students have worked so hard (and must continue to), were ready for the challenges ahead looking to prove to the world what they were capable of. They still have the opportunity to achieve this and it is vital that we now carry on and finish the job we have started, including NEAs and moderations (in case they are needed for whatever the exam boards have planned) and we will be in touch with individual groups of students to arrange this over the coming days.

Work will continue to be set for Y11 and Y13 and it is important that they complete the tasks to ensure readiness for their Post 16/Post 19 pathways and to fulfil any necessary examination board requirements (whatever these might prove to be). It is highly possible that coursework marks will be needed. With this in mind, students must complete all assessments and tasks that are set by their teachers.

I have spoken to the two year groups this morning to help reassure and give them a sense of direction and purpose now that the examinations have been cancelled. We also plan to help mark their rite of passage tomorrow as they leave the High, albeit earlier than expected and in a more subdued manner and I share their disappointment that for the moment at least, we are going to have to postpone the traditional celebrations of the end of Y11 and Y13. Watch this space!

We will endeavour to ensure that those students who have applied for the Sixth Form are supported in accessing appropriate courses and progression routes for September 2020. We have established procedures for such circumstances and will use them to support all students applying to the High School. We are grateful that the Prime Minister has given his assurance that the cancellation of examinations this summer will not prevent any student from progressing in education, employment or training and this includes universities and post 19 providers.

Homeworking:

Many of our students are anxious and if you ask them how they are doing/feeling you might be surprised about the questions they will ask you. I am sure as parents you already know this. Some might find the prospect of weeks off school exciting. I have no doubt that boredom will soon set in as will the isolation from friends.

Social media and instant communication might actually provide a good network of support for our children as they prepare for the challenges of the next few weeks.

Routines will also be very important. The BBC report below has some interesting advice for students and parents preparing for the weeks ahead:

https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-51936286?intlink_from_url=https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education&link_location=live-reporting-story

Mrs Ray and Mrs Schwarz have also prepared a top tip sheet for students and we will include this in the pack we send home tomorrow.

None of us know how long this will last. I for one have my fingers crossed that by the May half term we may have a chance of returning. For so many reasons I hope that those in the media who have speculated a September return are wrong and as for the educationalist who said that “schools wind down after the exams anyway”, they clearly don’t know the High School!

You have our assurance that for as long as it lasts we will continue to support learning

I have no doubt that more information will be given tonight and tomorrow and that I will be in touch again tomorrow. Please also be assured, that we will continue to keep the school open for as long as staffing allows us to do so.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M K Anderson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'M' and 'A'.

M K Anderson
Headmistress