



Verulam School
Excellence · Character · Respect

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19th March 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

Coronavirus/COVID-19 update – school closure

I am writing to update parents about recent developments and the decision to close schools. I regret that as of Monday Verulam School will be closed to all pupils apart from the children of key workers and our most vulnerable students. The Secretary of State will publish a list of key workers later today. We expect them to include those working in the front line health and emergency services and others involved in essential industries. I will send a further update when these details are clear. As yet we have no indication of the duration of this closure but I think it is reasonable to assume that it will be of significant length as the public examinations schedule for May and June have been cancelled.

Communication

During our closure I intend to keep in contact with parents and pupils by regular newsletters and parentmails. We will also update the website where appropriate and make use of Facebook. If you have any queries please contact admin@verulam.herts.sch.uk as normal.

Examinations and qualifications

The decision to cancel all examinations and assessments this year was a shock for all our students, however I feel that it was the only possible decision. Geoff Barton, the General Secretary of the Association of Schools and College Leaders, summed up the situation very clearly.

“Once it became clear that the epicentre of the virus was in the middle of the exam season, the prospect of running a full suite of exams became unfeasible. The decision therefore was whether to run a partial season – say, just A levels and perhaps English and maths GCSE. However, the problem with this is that we would end up with three groups of students – some who had sat all of their exams; some who had sat some; and some who were too sick to sit any. Trying to regulate fairness across such diverse groups would be impossible for the awarding bodies and regulator. So – unpalatable as it may seem – it’s actually easier to treat all young people the same by having none of them sit exams.”

The Secretary of State has stated that pupils will receive the qualifications they need and that further details will be given on Friday. We will offer students all our support over the coming months to ensure they enjoy the best possible outcomes. I will update parents as soon we know more information.

Sixth Form concerns

I am aware that the school closure has come at a very difficult time for Year 13 who may not have confirmed their university choices. Mr Base will be available in school next week to answer queries. Parents or students should email Stephen.base@verulam.herts.sch.uk or call to arrange an appointment with him.

Work for students in Years 7 to 10 and Year 12 during closure

On Friday, Mr Freakley will be sending a letter which explains all our arrangements for online learning in more detail. Work will be set for Years 7 to 10 and Year 12 via Show My Homework. Parents can also find additional work on the school website.

Arrangements for Friday

The school will be open to Years 7 to 10 from 8.35am until 2.00pm. Pupils will have normal lessons and assemblies explaining the closure and future learning arrangements. Pupils will have lunch and then be dismissed by 2.00pm. Years 11, 12 and 13 **will not** be in school.

The staff will be using the afternoon to plan the opening of a “skeleton school” for the children of key workers and to prepare online learning resources.

I would like to thank all parents for their support and to wish all our students well in this very difficult time.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'P A Ramsey', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

P A Ramsey
Headteacher