

6th January 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

I hope you and your families are safe and well. As a new year dawns and our fight against Covid continues, we find ourselves having to adapt to a raft of measures which are designed to navigate us through this stage of the pandemic.

We continue to act upon and respond to government and scientific advice and as you are aware, this includes the closure of schools for general provision of Education.

As per government directive, school will only be open for vulnerable pupils and children of critical workers in categories listed in Government guidance.

As in the previous lockdown, I will endeavour to keep parents and carers updated regularly as and when new guidance and information becomes available. All updates will be communicated via the MyEd app as well as the school website.

Can I strongly advise parents and carers who haven't already done so, to download the MyEd app as this is our primary conduit for communication to parents.

As you will recognise, this is a fast paced and fluid situation we find ourselves in and I appreciate the difficult situation families are finding themselves in. As a school we want to support families and where possible alleviate the anxieties and burdens this pandemic has placed on us all as a society.

During this second national lockdown, I look forward to working closely with families in partnership for the good of the children we serve and I will continue to update you regularly on developments and provide helpful information and reminders.

To that end, please find useful information below and thank you for your continued support.

Take care, be safe and stay strong.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs M Wilkinson
Headteacher

Remote Learning Protocols

There is guidance on our school website regarding how to use the Teams App, please follow the instructions for clarity on our expectations during school closure. It is imperative that the platform we are using for remote learning is used for academic purposes only. This means only comments relating to the work set are to be posted on the Teams App. There should be no images of work uploaded to Teams. Any violation or abuse of this system will be taken extremely seriously and dealt with at the highest level. Our remote learning plan will only be successful if pupils understand that this is not a holiday and that they must meet our expectations to complete work set. If this happens, I am confident that by working in partnership between home and school our young people can come out of this period of turbulence without having their education adversely impacted. We would appreciate parental support with this. Due to home circumstances or technical availability, if pupils are unable to log on at the time of their particular lessons, it is important to note that pupils will still need to complete the work set by their class teacher.

Form Time

Form time will take place on a Wednesday and a Friday. Form time will begin at 8.45 and last for 10 to 15 minutes. On Wednesday, the HOY will post a pre-recorded assembly in the Year group team. On the Friday, the HOY will post a pre-recorded liturgy in the Year group team.

Log In Issues

If your child is experiencing difficulties logging into their email account, please phone the school number. Please note that we are experiencing a high volume of calls at present requesting passwords to be reset. All requests are being dealt with as efficiently and swiftly as possible. We apologise for any inconvenience caused.

Further Advice for Vulnerable Children and the Children of Critical Workers

Supervised in school study for vulnerable children and the children of critical workers will start at 8.30 am and finish at 3.20 pm, this includes a Tuesday where we will revert to the normal school times during this period of lockdown. Please note access to the school site will be 8.30 am and not before. In line with social isolating guidance, after school clubs and revision sessions are cancelled and school will be closed to all pupils from 3.30 pm.

Pupils enter the school through the St Bede entrance and give their name to a member of staff. Pupils will not be taught formal lessons, but they will be supervised in classrooms and will complete the remote learning tasks set by their teachers. Lunch facilities will be available although a reduced menu will be offered depending on staffing and availability of supplies. Please note that all pupils are expected to be in full school uniform. For safeguarding purposes, it is important that we know which pupils we are expecting on site each day. We thank parents for their timely response so far and understand that your situation may differ from day to day and therefore ask that you let us know of any change in your circumstance by 3.00 pm daily.

Further Advice for Families with Children on Free School Meals

We will be following the same process as the winter voucher scheme with the vouchers being issued on a weekly basis.

Illness

In the event of your child becoming ill during school closure and being unable to complete the work please email the attendance officer alongside the relevant Head of Year:

Attendance Officer: Mrs Basford: basfordv@ourladyandstbede.org.uk

Year 7: Mrs Rhodes: rhodesc@olsb.bhcet.org.uk

Year 8: Mrs Egan: eganj@olsb.bhcet.org.uk

Year 9: Mr Gibbon: gibbona@olsb.bhcet.org.uk

Year 10: Ms Myers: myersa@olsb.bhcet.org.uk

Year 11: Miss Hellens: hellensc@olsb.bhcet.org.uk

Year 9 Options

This half term would usually see the beginning of the options process for our pupils in year 9. This is an exciting time when pupils begin to think about which subjects they would like to study at key stage 4 and their opportunities for further education and employment. Whilst we will be unable to begin this process this half term we will write to you when pupils return to school to inform you of the revised arrangements.

Year 10 January Mock Examinations

With the closure of schools, we have cancelled the mock examinations due for pupils in year 10 that were due to take place this January. Pupils in year 10 would normally have mock examinations both in January and in June. We will run a full programme of mock examinations for pupils in year 10 during the summer term.

Year 11 Examinations

The Secretary of State for Education has announced that external GCSE examinations will be cancelled for all pupils in year 11 and pupils will be awarded grades based on teacher assessment. We await further detailed guidance from the department of education but have robust procedures already in place to use a range of assessment evidence covering the full breadth of the curriculum that pupils study in key stage 4. We aim to ensure that our pupils are as well prepared as possible for the next stages of their education and employment to make the most of the opportunities available to them when they leave school. It is of the utmost importance therefore that pupils continue to access a full curriculum until the end of year 11. We will continue to assess pupil's progress to inform our judgements about the standard that each pupil will reach by the end of year 11.



Pupils in Year 11 were due to sit a formal series of pre-public mock examinations after half term. These examinations will not go ahead as planned from 1st March however we will reschedule these internal mock examinations when possible to do so and will keep you informed once pupils return to school.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

We are also aware that a number of our pupils rely on support from school for their mental health wellbeing. We would like to remind families of Kooth which is a free, confidential online mental health service for children and young people that offers online counselling. Please follow the link to find out more: www.kooth.com

In addition, there are a wealth of resources available for both parents and pupils available via the school website under the Well-Being Support section.

NHS Test and Trace: COVID-19 Testing for Staff and Students

Thank you to those who have already completed the consent for the Covid19 test. A reminder for those who haven't yet completed the form, please indicate whether you give consent for your child, or not by using the following link <https://bhcet.org.uk/covid19/>