

# Messages from the School

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## Coronavirus (COVID19) - 25 March

**Sent:** Wednesday 25 March 2020

**From:** networkmail@strs.org.uk

Dear Parents

The situation regarding COVID-19 and the advice from government and other administrations across the UK is changing rapidly, sometimes several times a day. I am well aware that this is clearly placing strain on pupils, parents and colleagues.

I would like to thank parents and other members of the school community for the continued messages of support.

### Arrangements for pupils not coming in to School

I hope that pupils are now adapting to using ShowMyHomework as a learning platform. We are aware that the speed of connection slows down at particular times of the school day – this is something that ShowMyHomework is trying to resolve. However, at the moment, the school server seems to be coping with the increased remote usage thanks to the skills of our ICT team.

Teachers are doing their best to set work that will ensure that students can continue to learn effectively and make progress at home. Pupils are able to continue to interact with their teachers and ask questions through ShowMyHomework. Of course, this method will never be as effective as a lesson that takes place in a classroom. Some pupils have emailed teachers directly, please be mindful that they may not be able to answer queries quickly due to their individual circumstances.

We have had some requests from parents to make arrangements to use live streaming platforms so that their son or daughter can have some face-to-face contact with their teachers. On the face of it, this idea seems a sensible way forward. However, whilst we will continue to consider all available resources to boost our students' learning experience during the school closure period, it is important to take into consideration that a considerable number of teachers are caring for their own children, looking after other dependents and some colleagues have already become unwell.

Live streaming also requires that staff and pupils have a reliable internet connection, something which is not always achievable with entire families now having to work from home. Furthermore, teaching unions have advised teachers not to offer online sessions for a variety of reasons – for example, they suggest that lessons delivered online can be recorded and edited which could lead to inappropriate postings on social media. As a Headmaster, I have a duty to fulfil the legal requirements placed upon us by the government, but also to respond to the guidance of teaching unions. As a school, we always endeavour to act in the best interests of all stakeholders and this has to include teachers as well as pupils.

### Arrangements for pupils coming in to School (children of Key Workers and vulnerable children only)

The School continues to be open for children of Key Workers and vulnerable children. We anticipate that we will be open for these groups over the holiday period in support of the country's effort to fight the Coronavirus. However, it is worth remembering that this will place further demands on our staff as some will be needed in School. We continue to practise social distancing when in School. Unfortunately, the canteen has now had to close. Therefore, we are requesting that children of Key Workers and vulnerable children bring a packed lunch when they come in. The School will send an email later today to all parents who have previously indicated that they may require the provision regarding arrangements for next week. If you have any queries in relation to this please email Dave Dempsey: [dd@strs.org.uk](mailto:dd@strs.org.uk)

### External examinations

As yet, we have received no further guidance from the Department for Education regarding how GCSE and A Level grades will be calculated. Once we are made aware, we will be in touch to ensure that you and your son or daughter are kept informed of the process and that you understand the choices that will be available to you. You have our utmost assurance that we will be working in your child's very best interests.

### Lost property

We are in the process of deep cleaning areas of the School. Named lost property is being stored securely and will be available for collection when the School is allowed to reopen.

I know that the next few weeks will continue to be extremely difficult for everyone. In such uncertain times, community really matters. I would like to once again express my sincere gratitude to all those who are playing their part in working together for us to remain safe and healthy.

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Headmaster