

March 17<sup>th</sup> 2020

Dear Parents,

I am writing to outline the latest developments regarding the coronavirus. In line with DfE guidance the school intends to remain open unless we are directed by the DfE to close.

We have, for many days, been working on two contingencies. The first involves measures we will employ to keep the school in operation. This will mean cancelling activities which are not absolutely essential. We will have to monitor the situation regarding staff absence which is likely to increase as the week progresses. If we have to make any changes to our daily operation we will inform you as quickly as we can. It is possible that we might have to consider a partial closure. Please keep your eye on the school website and the VLE. If we need to communicate with you this is how we will do it.

The second contingency involves preparations for a forced closure of the school. If this happens we will use our VLE to ensure that students have work to complete from home. In this event I will write to you with full details of this plan.

For now we continue to operate in as normal a way as possible. It is very important that we all follow government advice very carefully.

The latest advice from the DfE is detailed below:

- *Pupils should attend unless they feel unwell – if your child has any of the following symptoms they **should remain at home for 14 days**:*
  - *A new, continuous cough and/or*
  - *A high temperature*
- *Pupils should also **remain at home for 14 days** if anyone they live with has the above symptoms*

If your child is unwell or is self-isolating, report this as you would normally, by contacting the school. If you have informed us that your child is self-isolating there is no requirement to phone the school on subsequent days unless there is a reason to do so.

The latest guidance can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19#contents>

If your child has to self-isolate at home and you would like some work for them to do then there are plenty of things available on the VLE. This can be found here:

<https://balcarras.fireflycloud.net/work-from-home>

Alternatively, students can access the department pages. We are not in a position to be setting individual work for students because it would simply overload our staff. At the moment they are busy in the school attending to their first priority which is delivering lessons.

**Events that we have had to cancel/postpone**

- The Year 7 Castles trip (Wednesday/Friday this week) has been called off
- All sporting fixtures until further notice
- Year 13 Parents Evening, Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> March
- The Berlin Trip April 2<sup>nd</sup>

We have not received any information from the DfE about the impact of coronavirus on the public exam season. As soon as we have any information I will of course be in touch.

We will do everything we can to support our children and families through what is likely to be a difficult and unusual time. Please do get in contact with the school if you have any particular concerns. It might take a little longer than normal to get through, but please do bear with us.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dominic Burke". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Headteacher