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Headteacher: Mr K Flanagan

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Dear Parents and Carers

We are still awaiting confirmation around a lot of the information shared with all of us by the Prime Minister with regard to school going forward and I do realise that there is a lack of clarity for you as parents, equally so for us. I am sharing with you what I understand the position to be now and I will make sure that we keep up to date with information to you.

I think firstly I need to share with you where we are as a school today, as I fear that we may not be able to stay open for vulnerable and keyworker children for the whole period between now and the end of this crisis. I think it is quite possible that there will be weeks when we simply cannot operate.

We are at a point where we expect staffing to be reduced by 40% on Monday and that is with no new staff absence. The senior leadership team will be less than half its usual size on Monday and it may be this aspect of the school that causes a temporary closure.

With this in mind I am keen to make some headway on the planning for next week, whilst we are waiting for a final list around who the government are designating as keyworkers. It is important that as parents you begin to think about where your children will be next week.

Equally I need to make it clear that we are not compelling any student to attend next week, it is your choice where your children are from Monday, but we are endeavouring to open and provide what is in effect childcare for the nominated groups. I do mean childcare, we will not be following the curriculum and we will be looking for activities to allow the children to be active and engaged.

We will obviously need to manage the number of students in school and the guidance at this time, as I understand it, is that children should have both parents as keyworkers or where there is a case of a single parent, the single parent should be a keyworker. Otherwise it is expected that as people are being directed to work from home whenever possible, students will also be kept at home.

Once we have further guidance I will write again to ask that you nominate your child for a place here at school. I will be asking for some simple details, these will include your name, child's name, your position or role, telephone number for place of work, line manager's details and similarly the same sort of information for the second parent or carer if applicable.

I wanted to write to you now, as I want to impress upon you that we are not prying or trying to be difficult, I am simply trying to manage numbers, keep the students we have in school safe and protect my staff for as long as possible. I would imagine that when all of this has settled we will see infection rates amongst school employees that are above the norm and we expect that, but it is a little like the country's overall strategy of trying to delay some of the cases. We need to do this so that we can stay open and help parents, and I understand that if we do not, it will make it more difficult for a whole range of services to operate.

I hope to get the request for information out to you as soon as the keyworkers are defined by central government.

Finally I would like to ask for your support tomorrow. I am planning to close the school at 2.00pm for Years 7 – 10. I want the Year 11 to have a moment for themselves before they go. We are just going to order pizzas from Dominos and get some pop, and try to say goodbye properly. If you are a parent of any child in this school you should be very proud. How your children have conducted themselves through the last few weeks has for the most part been exceptional and they are pretty spot on all the rest of the year too. If you are a parent of a Year 11 then doubly so, 89% of Year 11 are in school today and that is after having the end point of 11 years' worth of work taken away yesterday. I cannot tell you how badly we feel and they are not our GCSEs, your children have amazing.

We cannot move the school buses, but we can look after any student in Years 7 – 10 that cannot get home. I hope that you understand why we are doing this and I do appreciate your support in advance.

Kevin Flanagan
Headteacher