



THOMAS MILLS HIGH SCHOOL

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Dear Parents

18th March 2020

IMPORTANT INFORMATION: PUBLIC HEALTH CORONAVIRUS – LETTER 2 (OF 2)

Following further Government announcements and the school's own assessment of the situation, I write with a second update. There have been some important changes especially around self-isolation.

I have needed to introduce some measures so that the school can remain open and ensure that attending pupils are adequately supervised.

Communication with and from the school

Parents need to be mindful that the school is very busy at the moment and Office Staff cannot engage in long conversations and they certainly cannot diagnose! We would request contact is made via email clearly stating whether it is for a 14 day period of self-isolation or for another reason.

Parents should check the official school website about the school's status and not be misled by Social Media. We will also email parents with any announcements.

Self-isolation

If one person in any household starts to display symptoms everyone in the household **must** stay at home for **14 days**. Any pupil absence should be reported in the usual way. Staff are also subject to the same rules and this will probably affect staffing levels.

NHS guidance about self-isolation:

When should you stay at home?

Stay at home if you have either:

a high temperature (37.8 degrees and above) – you feel hot to touch on your chest or back

a new, continuous cough – this means you've started coughing repeatedly

Do not go to a GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital.

You do not need to contact 111 to tell them you're staying at home.

Testing for coronavirus is not needed if you're staying at home.

There is also Government guidance about more vulnerable groups and I would urge families to consider this information.

If a pupil is off school, teachers are not able to set individual work. Pupils should complete as much work and study as they can.

Health Concerns of Pupils

If staff have any concerns about the health (i.e. a high temperature and/or a new, continuous cough) of a pupil they are to report this to designated senior staff and it is likely that the child will need to be sent home.

Evening Events

Given the natural anxiety that now exists over what constitutes a 'mass gathering' and 'social interaction', all evening events for parents are cancelled with immediate effect until at least the end of the academic year. In the imminent future, this includes the following events:

- Thurs 19th March – Year 9 Parents Evening
- Thurs 26th March – 40th Anniversary Celebration Concert, Snape Maltings



- Mon 27th April – Sixth Form/Tutor Review Meetings
- Thurs 30th April – Year 7 Parents Evening

Teaching Staff and Covering of Classes

Our priority must be the covering of lessons. Therefore, teachers will not be available during the day to attend meetings including multi-agency meetings. Meetings, including with senior staff, are also likely to be cancelled because staff may be needed to cover lessons.

Should we find it difficult to cover individual classes, we will be able to supervise a number of pupils in the Hall, Library or the Canteen. It is therefore important that all pupils have suitable reading material in case the situation arises where the cover work is not available.

Trips within the United Kingdom

Although government guidance implies these can continue, parents will be anxious about children travelling to other places. Also, should a child become ill during such a trip this will place a difficult burden on staff and the other pupils and therefore compromise safety. I have therefore made the decision that all school trips including residential trips to the United Kingdom are cancelled for this school year. Sporting fixtures are also cancelled until further notice.

External Examinations

Year 11 and 13 must be a priority. In the event of the school being forced to close, work will be created and shared virtually. We will then roll this out for all other year groups.

Some practical examinations for Drama and Art are quite imminent. At the moment, the usual preparations are in place but we will work closely with the Examination Boards. However, the ABRSM Music Examinations are cancelled until further notice.

Although we are not required to, we are asking teachers to provide 'predicted grades' that are optimistic and realistic. However, the indication at the moment is that external examinations are planned to go ahead. For all pupils preparing for external examinations they must complete coursework and continue to revise for examinations.

We have made the decision that **Year 12 will not sit AS Examinations**. New guidance on internal assessment for Year 12 will need to be issued in due course.

Canteen and Food

At the moment it is business as usual. However, the two considerations here are around staffing and supplies. Should this situation change we will let you know.

Assemblies

It seems prudent in the light of the national advice around social events, that assemblies are cancelled too.

Summary

It is fair to say that pupils and staff have responded to the situation with incredible calmness and resilience in spite of the many natural anxieties that exist. We are having to change the way that we do things and cannot be expected to offer the usual level of service.

It is clearly an unprecedented situation and our priority continues to be the well-being of pupils and reducing the possible impact on their education.

I thank you very much for the support and very much trust that you remain safe and well in the coming weeks and months.

Yours sincerely



P J Hurst
Headteacher