

19th March 2020

Dear parents/carers,

Re: Coronavirus update – school closure to most students

Apologies for the delay in this communication but my senior team have been meeting to decide the best immediate response as well as waiting for the latest government update which was due at 2.00pm but has not yet been released.

I'm now writing to let you know that **we have now been instructed to close the school to almost all children after this Friday until further notice.**

As per national guidance, from Monday 23rd March, the school will remain closed to all students except those where both parents are classed as key workers, as well as students who are subject to an Education and Healthcare Plan (EHCP) or children who have an allocated social worker. For those students who are eligible to attend, please note that this is not mandatory and online learning via our school's website is available should you elect to keep your child at home.

We are waiting for the government to publish more information but in order to ascertain numbers, we would ask that parents/carers who are key workers indicate this by filling out the form which is on the school's website <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/phoenixkeyworkers> and to indicate whether you intend for your child to attend school. **This must be completed by 11.00am tomorrow.** If you have any difficulties completing this form, please contact the school's reception. Note, that you may be required to provide evidence of your key worker status.

It is also worth stressing that the purpose and function of the school during this period is to be a central hub to support key workers and vulnerable children. With this in mind, students will not follow a normal timetable, but will work on online curriculum tasks in line with the students not in school. They will also participate in activities and tasks which are feasible and appropriate. The age range will be mixed. The school's opening hours will be 8.30am – 3.30pm. The restaurant will be open with limited choice.

We are unable to accommodate **students whose parents are not key workers** from Monday onwards (in line with the Government guidelines on social distancing) so they **will need to stay at home.**

Please note that this is a national closure – as you may have heard in the news – so while it is a challenging situation, we are not alone. We'll re-open fully as soon as we can and will let you know when this is by texting you and posting information on the school website www.aspirebelievesucceed.com

So that we can stay in touch, please ensure that we have your up-to-date phone number and email address. Should you change your details whilst we are closed, please email your new number to info@phoenix.sandwell.sch.uk remembering to include your child's name and year group

What we'll continue doing while your child is at home

Your child's learning is of course important to us, so we'll continue to help your child to learn.

- You will already have received a letter explaining this work, see earlier letter.

- Information is available from the school website. As far as possible in the short time we have had to prepare, children's activities have been tailored to try and maintain the curriculum from a distance as best we can. Staff will continue to share this work via the various online tools.
- Please remember to let us know as soon as possible if you do not have internet access at home.

If your child usually receives Free School Meals we will be providing an e-voucher shortly to all entitled families so that they you may purchase food for the family home. Alongside this over the next couple of weeks we shall be placing a grab bag for Free School Meal children to get from the West Bromwich food bank (*West Bromwich Community Church, Victoria Street, B70 EX*). These will be available from 12pm till 1.30pm Monday to Friday over the next couple of weeks. Note that this letter will be required when collecting your child's free school meal.

Please also note that after 1.30pm, any bags not collected will be distributed to those families who need them. My thanks go to Keith Turner and all at the food bank for supporting our vulnerable families. Once further information regarding the national voucher scheme becomes available, I will be in touch again.

This is as much as we know right now and we appreciate your continued patience with as we deal with this ever-changing situation. We understand that this latest news will have an impact on you and your family and it's far from ideal, but we'll continue to keep in touch with any updates as the situation develops.

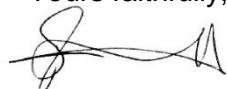
If you want to get in touch to share any concerns, please don't hesitate to do so via info@phoenix.sandwell.sch.uk

I have also attached an additional letter for Year 11 and Year 13 parents with some further information around examinations though we will not have details on how grades are to be awarded until tomorrow. It is very important though that our students in Years 10 and 12 continue with their work at home to help ensure that the curriculum is completed in time or their examinations next year.

And remember: if you or your child feels ill and you want to know what to do next, please use NHS 111 online. If your child is anxious in any way during this period then help is available via www.kooth.com

Thank you again for your continued support and understanding.

Yours faithfully,



Mike Smith
Head teacher