

18th March 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

You will of course all be aware of the developing situation around Coronavirus (COVID-19). As a school, the health and wellbeing of our students, staff and wider community is, as always, our absolute priority.

We take our duty of care extremely seriously and every decision is made with the best interests of your children in mind.

We are therefore continuing to closely follow the latest advice and guidance from the Government and Public Health England in what is a rapidly changing and developing situation. As a result of staff shortages, with a number self-isolating as a precaution in line with the latest Government advice issued by the Prime Minister and with others currently absent, we have reluctantly taken the decision to continue to close to students in Years 7 and 8 for the rest of this week.

I know a small number of parents have been unhappy at the school's decisions and have been abusive to our receptionists. As a school we will not tolerate this kind of unacceptable behaviour as staff are simply doing their job. The Phoenix Collegiate is simply trying to cope with the impact of this pandemic on our ability to staff a curriculum, by keeping open as requested by central government. A school's capability to remain open at this time helps ensure that our healthcare professionals and other public servants have the ability to remain in work.

We ask that students in Years 7 and 8 do not come to school on Thursday 19th and Friday 20th March and instead remain at home. We will review this partial closure on Friday and will update all parents and carers accordingly.

Other year groups will continue to attend school as normal and we will keep you updated should this change. Whilst we understand this partial school closure will cause disruption for you and your family, we have robust plans in place so that your child can continue their education during this time. As always, we are committed to ensuring that our students receive the best possible education and will be working hard to minimise the impact of the temporary closure on your child's education.

All students in Years 7 and 8 will be set work by their teachers via Class Charts available via the school's website, again should they have issues accessing this please contact the school. We would ask that you encourage your child to complete all assigned work. Please use the website first for guidance and any specific questions should be email to the relevant member of staff via Office365 - please see yesterday's letter for teachers' email addresses.

Further information will be communicated to parents/carers via Parent Pay and the school website.

Further to my letter yesterday which included advice from the NHS about painkillers, there is now some uncertainty around the use of ibuprofen and its effect on Coronavirus Covid-19. The new advice received is to use paracetamol and not ibuprofen or other anti-inflammatory drugs.

Finally we are looking at ensuring during any closures that our students have access to free school meals. We are currently considering a couple of options as there is not a coordinated approach being taken by Sandwell local authority.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the vast majority of parents/carers for your understanding and on-going support in helping us to manage this unprecedented situation.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mike Smith', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mike Smith
Head teacher