



Eastlea Community School

Coronavirus / Covid-19 Update 2: 16th March, 2020



Dear Eastlea Community,

This is a very concerning time for us all with a Coronavirus / Covid-19 Pandemic having been declared. Whilst we can try to reassure children, staff and parents, ultimately this is a fast changing picture which everyone is trying to grapple with. I spoke with all students last week, to say what I could, however this is essentially that we are following Government guidance.

Guidance is fairly limited beyond basic public health guidance and currently every school is trying its best to plan within the constraint that currently our Government says that we should stay open. Most of us expect that at the right time, this guidance will change and hence we are trying to plan for both what we will do when / if we are told to close, and what we need to adapt to, whilst we stay open.

As this situation develops, we will follow all relevant guidance to play our part in helping to keep everyone safe and will update you if we are given more information or clearer guidance. Whilst school buildings may need to close, it is our aim that schooling will continue as much as possible, either by online learning, or by sending resources home with students. Whilst our priority will of course be to our vulnerable students and our Year 11 students who face an uncertain time with their GCSE examinations, we will try our best to maintain an education for all students.

I am writing this update to our whole community: students, parents, and staff, to perhaps help us all work together at this difficult time.

Attendance

Please try to keep up to date with the latest Government guidance concerning self-isolation. We are advising all students, and staff, who display the symptoms (currently a new continuous cough and/or a high temperature) to self-isolate. Parents, please keep your children at home for at least 7 days if they display the Coronavirus symptoms. Please be assured that the Government has given schools permission to authorise absence where this is due to Coronavirus associated illness or self-isolation. Should there be parents where you are concerned about possible penalties for persistent absence, again, this is a special case, and this would not happen.

Vulnerable Students

We have a number of students who have complex medical needs and who may be at greater risk from the Coronavirus. Miss Lane and Miss Grigore are working with their teams to plan the best actions to take for our many students with complex medical needs. There is no clear guidance for us that we are aware of, however, we will communicate directly with these families on a case by case basis as necessary. Each parent of children in this group should liaise with Miss Lane or Miss Grigore if they are concerned, and ultimately we will work upon safety first as a strategy.

Basic Hygiene and Cleaning

Every teacher has been talking to their tutor groups about basic steps that we can all take to help in keeping ourselves safe and protecting others. I hope that you will have taken the time to talk through the Public Health England guidance poster which I sent home, and I would please ask you to support our community by again talking to your son/daughter about the importance of washing their hands regularly for at least 20 seconds with lots of soap and water.

Each evening we have asked our cleaning company to thoroughly clean the school to help prevent any contamination.

Year 11 GCSEs

We are monitoring the changing situation nationally concerning GCSEs this year. We do not as yet know whether exams will continue as planned, or whether they will be postponed until later in the year. We are continuing to proceed assuming currently that exams will continue as planned, until we are told otherwise. Online resources are being prepared, together with study packs for every Year 11 student in the eventuality that we may be told to close the school.

Years 7-10

Staff are currently working hard to plan for the potential prospect of the school needing to close either completely, or in part. Our aim if we had to tell some or all year groups to stay at home, would be to try our best to continue providing a learning experience whilst the children are not here with us. We have no current intention of needing to do this, however, this is a fast-moving situation.

Communication

Please ensure that we have your up to date contact details both by email and mobile phone number so that we can communicate with you if there becomes a need to do so. Please also register with ParentMail since this will be our primary communication method.

School will remain open until or unless we receive clear Government guidance that we should close, or there is a specific eventuality at Eastlea that means we may need to consider partially or fully closing. The situation is currently developing rapidly every day and I will write again as the situation changes or there is more information to tell you. Until then, please do everything in your power to help our community to stay safe by following the health and safety advice from our Government.

Best Wishes



James Bowkett
Interim Principal