



Eastlea Community School

Coronavirus / Covid-19 Update 3: 18th March, 2020



Dear Eastlea Community,

News, advice, guidance and the impact upon us all is changing daily and growing rapidly. I wrote to you all 2 days ago, but it already feels like a long time in the past. I need to write again to update you.

Government guidance is still that we should remain open. However, students, families and staff here at school are quite rightly following Government guidance to keep themselves, their families and everyone else safe at this time.

We should all be following the government guidance which is currently as follows:

- Anyone with a new continuous cough or high temperature should stay at home for 14 days, as should all members of that household.
- Everyone should minimise social mixing in the community (being in school is not defined under current government guidance as social mixing).
- By the end of this week, the government is directing all at risk people (Over 70, pregnant women and those with serious underlying health conditions) to stay at home isolated for 12 weeks.

I ask you to please consult this and all available government guidance to decide how to respond as a family to protect you all; I realise that these are difficult decisions. I also fully support any member of staff who decides that to follow the government guidelines, they must stay at home to keep themselves, their family and everyone else safe.

I currently have to try to follow Government guidance to keep our school open, however, I need to decide whether we have enough staff in school to operate safely.

We today have just managed to operate as a school that is open to all students, however I do not believe that this will be sustainable for much longer. I have a large number of staff who are now absent either because they are ill through more normal reasons, or who are now self-isolating for their own and/or their family's protection. Today our staff absence level has increased dramatically, and I expect this to rise further tomorrow.

From tomorrow we expect to have to start combining classes and changing how/what we teach. It is looking highly likely that very soon, possibly by Friday, I will need to close the school to some year groups. We will try to keep the school going as long as we can for our older GCSE students.

If/when we do have to close the school to some or all students, we will be setting work online for students, and their teachers will be communicating with them by email and through our DPR system.

There are many more strategies that we are trying to rapidly put in place to support families, however I will communicate again when we have further information ready and available.

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.

I thank those of you that have taken the time to show your support, and I hope that you can understand that this is a very difficult time to be trying to follow government guidance, whilst also doing what feels right to protect our community. I must pay tribute to our staff who are still trying to do the right thing for our community, discharging their duties as public servants, perhaps to the detriment of themselves and their families.

My best wishes to you all at this difficult time.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JMB', is positioned above the printed name and title.

James Bowkett
Interim Principal