

St Crispin's School

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St. Crispin's
Excellence for all



19th March 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

Re: COVID-19

St. Crispin's, along with all other schools, will close to most students at the end of the school day on Friday 20th March.

As Headteacher I am wholly committed to my civic and professional duty to keep the school operational so that we might provide education for our students whose parents are key workers as well as our most vulnerable learners. By remaining open, albeit within limits, I am better placed to discharge our ambition to set regular, high quality remote learning tasks. Away from this initial reactionary phase, I know the Teachers of St. Crispin's will absolutely thrive in developing and delivering rich and creative opportunities to support learning in this new way.

A full list of key worker categories has still to be agreed by the Cabinet Office. When the list has been published, I will send a Schoolcoms to all Parents. Those who meet this published definition of key worker will be requested to fill in a short online form to help inform our planning. Students who are considered to be vulnerable will be contacted individually. As Headteacher I will not be the arbiter of who is classed as a key worker and I will simply continue to absolutely follow DfE and Public Health England guidelines. Students in these groups will continue to attend school. **However and regrettably all other students who do not fall into these identified groups, in line with governmental decision, must remain at home.**

Our priority today and tomorrow is to ensure a safe and orderly close of the school to the majority of students. Consequently, today we have been able to focus our support for students in Key Stage 4 and post 16. We have spent time with our oldest students in purposeful learning whilst supporting their emotional well-being and particularly those who are very distressed regarding the change in arrangements for public examinations. We are

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comforting students in these circumstances by helping them understand that although this specific moment of assessment has been taken from them what can never be stolen is all they have learnt, all they have gained in knowledge and honed in skills. Learning lasts forever: it is never devalued by not being measured.

I am in little doubt that in the coming days there will be further clear advice and instruction regarding GCSE and A-Level qualification. As this is confirmed I shall of course advise you. I am confident though that, by fair and sound methodology, awards will be made as well as an opportunity provided for candidates to sit these examinations in another assessment period. This of course is especially important for students who are eager to demonstrate their dedication, hard work and preparation for their exams. Therefore our strong message to students is that learning for Year 11 and Year 13 absolutely continues.

Tomorrow our attention must move to Key Stage 3 and preparing these younger students for independent and remote learning routines and expectations. Therefore I can confirm that **St Crispin's is closed on Friday 20th March to Years 10, 11, 12 and 13.**

I recognise, indeed am painfully only too aware, that Year 11 students may feel that they have lost their rites of passage and traditions associated with the end of their formal education. Simply put, we absolutely are committed to recovering this moment to help this cohort symbolically mark the end of this era. I hope the Prom will be central to our plans and is sufficiently far away (July) that we might have reasonable confidence it will take place. Other practicalities such as the return of books, emptying of lockers and receipt of Leavers Hoodies also provide moments that we might seize upon. I simply did not want today to cheapen the moment in rushed thinking or a shallow event.

For our students who are eligible for free school meals we are committed to and will be offering support to families and will write separately regarding this ongoing provision. This will most likely be in the form of vouchers for local supermarkets/shops. The Government has formally committed to funding this and I hope that this firm and clear commitment will provide immediate reassurance to families whilst St. Crispin's is closed.

Whilst I know that there is no substitute for being in a classroom with a teacher, we will continue to set work remotely through our school INSIGHT. Next week Heads of Department will set students a bespoke learning project in Key Stage 3 and a pre-learning (a future exam topic) project for Years 10 and 12. Teachers will continue to set individual work for their Year 11 and Year 13 classes. Using INSIGHT allows Teachers at St. Crispin's to set class specific work. This means that as a parent you will receive an email that informs you work has been set. You can even log on to the INSIGHT app to see the detail of the set task. Students also receive the same information via email. This week's disruption, as colleagues have necessarily self-isolated, has meant that we have been able to test our INSIGHT system live,

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and I have been pleased to receive positive comments from parents already that the system is helpful and robust. Perhaps our students' attention to the work set a little less so!

Thereafter in the next week I will refine with Teachers the routines of our "new normal" in the setting of regular remote learning.

I appreciate that families confined to homes may find this "new normal" rather taxing. It may be helpful therefore that as Headteacher I promote a learning routine that your son or daughter may find productive.

In essence, I strongly recommend developing a clearly defined routine and pattern of learning time Mondays to Fridays, which has a clear start and finish time with interspaced breaks that work in the routines of your household. As a rule of thumb five hours of learning daily reflect the routines of a school day. Students would benefit, if at all possible, in working in an area of the home that is not where they also socialise or sleep. Whilst wearing school uniform is of course redundant I suspect there is considerable value in getting dressed for learning rather than staying in pyjamas or similar! It will be settling and helpful for students' well-being and learning capacity to keep very defined times and areas for both work and rest.

Our Educational Psychology team offer the following well-being tips for families which I share with you below:

- Talk to your children, and answer their questions. Ask about what they have heard about the virus and the situation so that you can correct possible misconceptions and reassure them.
- Avoid being too immersed in media coverage. Be mindful of the amount of things you are reading and watching, including social media – as this may add to worry and anxiety. Consider a few updates every day from trusted sources.
- Remember that people react differently to significant events. Some people – adults and children – may feel worried, some excited, some nothing much at all. Be reassured that different reactions are normal and ok.
- If your child seems worried, it may be good to distract themselves with something that takes their mind off their worries. You might also want to set aside 10-15 minutes each day for them to talk about any worries, and to reassure them.
- Remember to keep things positive and give children hope. For example, tell children that now many people are working to make this better and that even though it is serious, everyone is doing their best to help people.
- Try to keep familiar routines. Well-known routines in everyday life provide security and stability.
- Do nice things together, and keep active. Make a plan and suggest some regular family times where you can play games, do some exercise together, or do other things that you



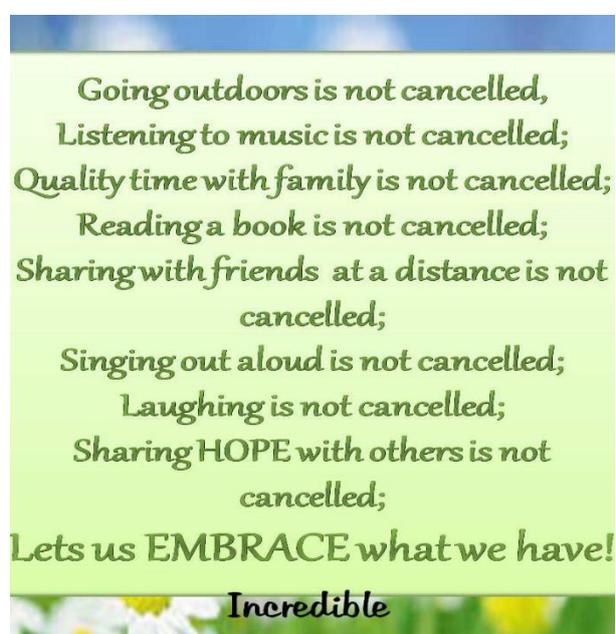
know most of you like. Try to find a good balance between times together, and screen time.

- Keep in good contact with family and friends (via FaceTime, Skype WhatsApp etc.; following NHS guidance on 'social contact'). This will help children connect with others and know that others are thinking about them. It will also reassure them that others are well.

There are also some links which you may find useful at the end of this letter.

I know this is a very strange time for a vast majority of parents and students. Schools are mechanisms that provide structures to all our lives but please be assured St. Crispin's remains a strong community even though for most this will be a virtual one for the time being.

Perhaps, if I may, a final thought which I shared with colleagues earlier this week.



Yours faithfully,

Ms Rhodes
Headteacher

Some useful links:

NHS advice:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Advice on talking to children about Coronavirus, by British Psychological Society:

<https://www.bps.org.uk/sites/www.bps.org.uk/files/Policy/Policy%20-%20Files/Talking%20to%20children%20about%20Coronavirus.pdf>

How to talk to your child about coronavirus, by Unicef:

<https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/how-talk-your-child-about-coronavirus-covid-19>

Child-friendly explanation of Coronavirus for Primary age students:

https://660919d3-b85b-43c3-a3ad-3de6a9d37099.filesusr.com/ugd/64c685_319c5acf38d34604b537ac9fae37fc80.pdf

Information video on Coronavirus for Primary age children (KS2), by Brainpop:

<https://www.brainpop.com/health/diseasesinjuriesandconditions/coronavirus/>

Information video on Coronavirus for older children/adults, by WHO:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mOV1aBVYKGA&feature=youtu.be>

Coronavirus and your wellbeing, by Mind UK:

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/>

5 ways to wellbeing, by Mindkit:

<https://www.mindkit.org.uk/5-ways-to-wellbeing/>

