



13 March 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

As I am sure you are aware the national picture regarding advice about Covid-19 is changing. To ensure that we make the best decisions we are reliant on timely and clear guidance from Government and East Sussex County Council to which we then respond. I am now in a position to write to you with information regarding the latest updates.

Existing precautions already in place within the College

Further to our previous guidance I can confirm that we continue to operate with maximum precautions available to us at this time.

- Repeated reminders, given since November, of the importance of basic hygiene and in particular effective handwashing using soap. Signs are up in all toilet areas.
- Our premises team has already conducted a thorough clean of the site over the holiday and are redirecting resources to ensure that high usage areas are being disinfected on a daily basis.
- Duty staff in and around eating areas such as the Canteen, Quad and Snack Shack were equipped with hand sanitiser which students were expected to apply before eating. These have now been replaced with static wall fixed versions.
- Contact with the bus companies has identified that all are cleaning on a daily basis using antibacterial cleaners with a highlighted awareness of the cleanliness of areas used by the public. The drivers on the public services have hand gel available as they are exchanging money.
- PE are issuing reminders about post-match hand washing.
- Practices within the College kitchens have been checked and are of the highest vigilance.

Action required: We are noticing that some students are still not operating basic hygiene regarding hand washing *until* they come into College, please can all parents insist that they are washing hands before they leave home in the morning.

School Trips

The updated guidance for schools and colleges is that we are being advised against all overseas trips for children under 18 until further notice. At this point in time, trips to locations within the UK would mostly be categorised under the medium or large



gatherings and, currently, cancellation has not been advised. If this guidance changes then clearly, some events would need to be reviewed in that light. Therefore, for the remaining weeks up to and including the Easter holidays the following represents our adjusted position:

- The Music Tour to Germany (Saturday 4 April to Wednesday 8 April) and the Ski Trip to Austria (Saturday 4 April to Thursday 9 April) will be cancelled. We are currently awaiting guidance from East Sussex County Council about the implications for insurance in this case and will update parents as soon as we know more.
- Trips to venues where we know there are larger numbers of diagnosed cases will also be cancelled. This means the Year 13 Economics and Business Studies Revision Conference trip to London (Friday 3 April) and the Year 9 and 12 Art and Photography trip to the Botanical Gardens at Kew (Tuesday 31 March) will not go ahead. It is possible this will have a cost implication for the College that we will have to manage as it does not currently fall under government guidance. We will update parents concerned when we know more.
- The Primary School Tag Rugby event (Wednesday 25 March) will be cancelled. Our Primary School Sports Link Co-Ordinator will be in contact with primary schools to ensure they are all aware.
- Smaller venues and events in College will go ahead and attendance is viewed as a parental decision to be made based on your own circumstances. This means:
 - The Maths trip to Mayfield Girls School (Monday 16 March) will go ahead.
 - The Big Dance (Tuesday 31 March) is scheduled to go ahead but if it has to be cancelled parent's tickets will be reimbursed by the venue.
 - Year 10 Parents' Evening will go ahead with all internal precautions already explained. If we have to cancel this due to a change in guidance we will provide individualised feedback from staff for students in subjects sitting GCSEs this summer only in order to manage staff workload, although they may be able to offer generic subject advice in other cases.
 - The Library Quiz will currently go ahead with all internal precautions already explained.
 - Drama performances to parents will currently go ahead with all internal precautions already explained.

Further calendared trips after the Easter holidays will be assessed in the light of updated guidance, particularly if there are changes to advice about the size of gatherings. We will again be following the guidance issued by Public Health England and East Sussex County Council.

However, we do have some trips abroad planned for Enrichment Week to Spain and France. We are unclear whether the existing guidance from government will still apply at that stage, however, we feel that we *may* have no choice but to cancel due to the unknown nature of how things will develop. We have therefore decided to suspend further payment of deposits until the position on insurance for this eventuality becomes clearer.

Parents and carers arranging for their children to travel abroad over the holidays should be aware of the risk of likely travel restrictions into the UK in the coming weeks. This is of course particularly important for students sitting GCSE exams next term.

Staff absence and College Closure

As you will be aware, the government have not taken the decision to close schools at this stage. If this were to be decided there is much more information that we need to have, not least the implications for this summer's exam season. To date, Ofqual (Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulations) have not confirmed alternative arrangements if scheduled GCSEs are postponed or cancelled. We will notify relevant parents, carers and students as and when Ofqual informs schools of any changes to the published summer exam arrangements.

Therefore, the only circumstances under which we would currently close would be either under the direction of Public Health England or related to levels of staff absence that would compromise the safe running of the College. In those circumstances we would notify parents under the normal emergency closure procedures which are available on our website: http://www.heathfieldcc.co.uk/?page_id=414262. In these circumstances, closure is likely to be at short notice, so parents/carers are asked to plan flexibly for this eventuality.

We will be holding staff training on Monday 16 March after school to set the expectations for working practice and provision for remote learning in the event of extended school closure. We will update you on what you can expect to support your son/daughter in due course.

General Guidance

Can I take this opportunity to remind you of the guidance we issued previously and the common sense precautions we can all take:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/869250/Coronavirus_advice_for_educational_settings_poster.pdf

Like you, we are following the government guidance relating to symptoms and advised responses carefully. We understand that individuals will be affected by this situation differently. You will wish to make decisions based on your perception of risk to different members of your family. Please understand that we are only able to respond to the official guidance we receive and will always try to act as calmly as possible in the best interest of the students.

I understand that in these circumstances you may not always agree with those decisions, much as you may or may not agree with the official government response, but ask you to be patient with us and await further updates which we will ensure we give as clearly and as soon as we are able.

Thank you as always for your continued support, calmness and pragmatism in the face of these changing circumstances.

Yours sincerely



MS C BARLOW
Headteacher