



19 March 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

## **Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update**

Yesterday's communication gave brief, summary details of the announcement from the Secretary of State for Education that all schools in England will close from this Friday and that GCSE and A level examinations will be cancelled this summer.

Whilst there is much uncertainty surrounding the details of this announcement, I have outlined below the information we can provide at present and will update you with further details in due course.

### **School closure**

From Monday 23 March 2020, Ashlyns School will be closed for the majority of students until further notice. The Government's announcement also stated that schools should remain open to children of 'key workers' and vulnerable children including, where possible, over the Easter period. This is to enable frontline services to continue running efficiently.

### **What is the definition of 'key workers' and do I have to send my child to school?**

Some categories were mentioned in the announcement - NHS, police, delivery drivers - but there has been no further detail on this as yet. We are awaiting further communication and will seek to clarify what this means. We will be in touch explaining how we will collate this information, as soon as possible. If you are a key worker and your child is old enough to remain at home unsupervised or supervised by another parent/carer who is not a key worker, there is no need to send them to school.

### **My child receives free school meals. How will this be administered?**

The Government announced that, to support children eligible for free school meals, schools will be able to purchase meals or vouchers for supermarkets or local shops. It is likely that the school will be asked to order vouchers directly from supermarkets or shops in the community which will be emailed or printed and posted to families. As soon as we have confirmation of the details, we will confirm these arrangements.

### **My child has an Education Health Care Plan. How will they be supported?**

Children with an EHCP are included in the group of students for whom school will stay open. The Government has made it clear that schools are not expected to follow the national curriculum during this period, but we will do all we can to ensure these students have a positive and safe learning experience.

### **What will my child do when they are not at school?**

The school's plans for remote learning are well advanced and students will be set work to complete. We have a training session for staff after school today to help support the delivery of a remote curriculum. Parents and students will be provided with further details in due course. It is important we try to keep our children's learning at the centre of plans to support them in the future.

### **GCSEs and A levels for Year 11 and Year 13**

The Secretary of State also announced that GCSE and A level examinations will not go ahead this summer. He stated that Ofqual is working with examination boards to ensure that students' achievements are appropriately recognised and that no student will be disadvantaged by this move. The Secretary of State has confirmed that further details will be published tomorrow. Clearly, this will have an impact on all those students who have been working towards these examinations. I will be speaking to all affected students in school over the next two days to give them reassurance that we will do all we can to support them. Given that today and tomorrow are likely to be their last days of formal schooling this academic year, we want to ensure these are positive experiences for them. As such, they should attend school as normal if they are able to and if they have not been involved in isolation.

We appreciate this is an unsettling time for everyone and thank you for your continuing support, patience and understanding.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James Shapland'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J' and 'S'.

**James Shapland**  
**Headteacher**