

The Hemel Hempstead School

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18th March 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

Thank you for the patience and trust that you have placed in us over these most difficult couple of weeks. As you know from our previous correspondence we have been doing everything that we can to keep the school open, in line with the government's expectations of us.

However the Secretary of State for Education has just made a surprising announcement in the House of Commons, the very specific details of which schools were given no time to plan for. We will need to spend the next two days working out how we are going to be able to respond.

In the first instance we are writing now to tell you that we are no longer able to keep the school open, for all year groups, for the following reasons:

1. We have a large number of staff who are in the vulnerable and high risk groups identified by the government and are therefore now needing to socially distance.
2. We have some staff who are symptomatic or have family members who are symptomatic and are therefore having to self-isolate.
3. These number of absent staff are making it impossible for us to operate the school safely or effectively for every year group.

The school will be open as normal for all year groups on Thursday 19th March 2020.

The safety of our whole community is our number one priority and therefore we will be closing the school to all in Years 7, 8 and 9 on Friday the 20th March 2020.

The school will be open as normal for years 10, 11, 12 and 13 on Friday 20th March 2020.

Following the Secretary of States' announcement we will need to restructure our school so that from Monday 23rd March 2020 it is open only for those students who are the children of key workers or especially vulnerable.

It is intended that this special provision continues through the Easter holidays.

The Secretary of State did not define clearly either of these groups to the House and we await his written confirmation over the next few days. However in the interim we will begin to plan using the working assumption that those groups will be defined as followed:

Those defined as key workers generally include:

- Clinical National Health Service staff (except doctors and dentists)
- Teachers and nursery nurses
- Police officers, Community Support Officers and some civilian police staff
- Prison officers and some other Prison staff
- Probation Service staff
- Social workers, educational psychologists, and therapists
- Local Authority Planners

- Firefighters
- Connexions Personal Advisers
- Some Ministry of Defence personnel
- Environmental Health Officer
- Highway Agency Traffic Officers

Those defined as especially vulnerable generally include:

- Children looked after for previously looked after
- Those with an Education and Health Care Support Plan
- Children with a Child in Need plan.

So from Monday the 23rd March those in all year groups who are not defined as the children of key workers or specifically vulnerable will need to work at home.

1. Initially those students will receive a work pack from each subject area via SAM learning
 - a. www.samlearning.com
2. This platform can be used on any device including desktop computers, laptops, tablets and mobile phones
 - a. This work can be done at any time, but all work should be completed within the deadline set
 - b. You will need to following log in details
 - i. The school ID is HP1 HH (in capitals)
 - ii. Your username is Your date of birth, then your initials
 1. So Bob Smith, born on the 13th April 2007 would be 130407BS
 - iii. Your password is the same as your username
3. We will then nuance this provision using the familiar Show My Homework to set homework and provide notes, presentations, tasks, practice papers and hand-outs etc. There is an app you can download onto your phone.
4. This provision will run for the foreseeable future.
5. This provision will be under continual review by the Leadership Team.

We will continue to operate as normally as possible:

1. You can contact the school via parentmail@hemelschool.com
2. You can contact the school on 01442 390 100
3. We will operate this special web page to keep you informed on the website under Parents → COVID-19.
4. Students who are entitled to free school meals will continue to be entitled to that support and we will be providing ASDA vouchers which will be send to parents.

We continue to ask you to follow the same healthcare advice form the government, even if your child is one of those identified to continue to attend school:

- Asking you to keep your children at home if they have a new continuous cough and/ or a temperature of over 37.5°C. You, they and any other siblings must stay at home and not leave the

house for 14 days from the date that the first person gets ill. We are requiring the same of our staff and our governors. This is called 14 days self-isolation.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

- If your child becomes ill during the school day with a cough or high temperature we will ask you to collect them, take them home and begin the same process of self-isolation with your family for 14 days. We are applying the same measures to our staff, governors and visitors.
- The government has issued guidance on those who might be at greater risk and those individuals are being encouraged to discuss with the professionals who look after their care whether they need to stay at home for the foreseeable future. This includes:
 - those who are 70 or older
 - those who are pregnant
 - those with respiratory disease such as asthma, bronchitis and emphysema
 - those with chronic heart, kidney or liver disease,
 - those with chronic neurological disease such as Parkinsons
 - those with diabetes
 - those with weakened immune systems including those who have organ transplant, chemotherapy or radiotherapy
 - those requiring ongoing treatment such as steroids or dialysis.
- These people are advised to stay at home, avoid social gatherings and public transport and to work from home where possible. The advice is that this may be the case for several weeks (possibly up to 12) This is called vulnerable persons social distancing.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-social-distancing-and-for-vulnerable-people/guidance-on-social-distancing-for-everyone-in-the-uk-and-protecting-older-people-and-vulnerable-adults>

We fully understand that the decisions made by the Government today will have huge implications for you and your family. These are unprecedented times and we will place the safety of our whole community at the centre of our decision making.

At this stage this is all we know. As soon as we find out the full detail we will advise you.

Please can we request that you refrain from responding to this news by asking questions immediately of the school as this will consume resources and limit our ability to actually find out all the things that parents need to know.

Yours sincerely



Neil Hassell
Headteacher