



Coronavirus (COVID19) - 17 April 2020

Dear Parents

I hope you have managed to find some time for yourself over an unusual Easter holiday and that pupils have had a break from the daily routine of work provided through Show My Homework (SMHW). Following the decision by the government to extend the Lockdown restrictions for at least another three weeks, I am writing to you to let you know that we are working hard to plan for the forthcoming weeks and months as best as we can.

Arrangements for pupils not coming in to School

For the time being, we will continue to use SMHW for teachers to set work for each normal timetabled lesson that a pupil would have if they were able to attend school. Pupils are able to continue to interact with their teachers and ask questions through SMHW and via email. We are well aware that this method is not as effective as a lesson that takes place in a classroom and we are looking at ways of providing a more interactive experience for some year groups where possible.

However, despite the tremendous efforts of our ICT team, over the Easter break, one of the School's servers stopped functioning and this will mean that remote access to the School's systems may be slower. Two months ago, we ordered a new server in anticipation of the potential need to work remotely. However, we are still awaiting its arrival, nevertheless, it is expected within the next two weeks. Fortunately, remote learning using SMHW will not be negatively affected.

We have asked staff to ensure that work set for Year 11 and Year 13 through SMHW supports their next steps, be that education or training. It will be up to the students to decide whether they complete this work but, by continuing to guide their education, we hope to instil in them that learning is not just about examinations and they could gain an advantage over previous and future cohorts through the development of their resilience and self-discipline and by being well-read and intellectually curious.

Further online resources

The government has updated [a list of online educational resources](#) to help children to learn at home. These websites have been identified by some of the country's leading educational experts and offer a wide range of support and resources for pupils of all ages. The BBC is also enhancing its education provision to include daily lessons, starting from 20 April 2020.

Staying safe online

A reminder that there is considerable support available to keep children and young people safe online. Below are some useful links to help parents and carers:

- [Thinkyouknow](#) (advice from the National Crime Agency to stay safe online)
- [Internet matters](#) (support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online)
- [Parent info](#) (support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online)
- [LGfL](#) (support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online)
- [Net-aware](#) (support for parents and careers from the NSPCC)

Arrangements for pupils coming in to School (children of Critical Workers and vulnerable children)

The School continues to be open for children of Critical Workers and vulnerable children in support of the country's effort to fight the Coronavirus. The School has already sent an email to all parents who have previously indicated that they may require this provision over the Easter period. If your circumstances have changed or you have any queries in relation to this, please email Dave Dempsey: dd@strs.org.uk. We continue to practise social distancing when in School. The canteen is still closed. Therefore, we are requesting that children of Key Workers and vulnerable children bring a packed lunch when they come in.

External examinations

The Department for Education (DfE) has announced that this year's **GCSE students** will receive their results on **Thursday 20 August**, while those who are awaiting **A level** results will receive theirs on **Thursday 13 August**. These dates are the same as those published at the start of this academic year. For more information on how GCSE and A Levels will be impacted by the closure of education settings please refer to previous emails from Matt Lynch (Head of Sixth Form) and Peter Daniell (Head of Upper School). The DfE's previously published guidance is [available here](#).

Ofqual has launched its consultation on early entry GCSEs which includes our Year 9 Geology students and Year 10 early entry Religious Studies (and some other issues). There is a useful Schools Week summary [here](#). The consultation itself is [here](#).

The next few weeks will continue to be extremely difficult for everyone, particularly as we learn of family and friends with the virus and especially of those who have lost loved ones. Nevertheless, we are well aware that the cancellation of public exams for Year 11 and Year 13 was tough for them to take. Whilst, for very few of our students, there might have been some relief at not having to take the final exam, for the vast majority this news has been extremely unsettling and worrying, not least after putting in so much effort over so many years.

The Senior Leadership Team, along with Heads of Department and subject teachers are working together to ensure that we follow the guidance accurately. We intend to fulfil the promises made in our earlier emails that we will use all information at our disposal to generate fair and positive grades for each of our students before we submit them to Ofqual for statistical adjustment. The guidance is clear that we must award grades that students would most likely have achieved if they had taken their examinations and completed any non-examined assessments. In accordance with statutory guidance from Ofqual, staff must not release mock results, predicted grades or any other relevant data during this process. However, you have our utmost assurance that we will do all we can to work for all of our students' very best interests.

Mental Health, well-being and safeguarding

A reminder that whilst the Mental Health Support Team is not currently able to offer their service due to the redeployment of NHS staff to frontline duties, there is a CAMHS helpline available for children, young people and families who may require support and advice from the NHS: Telephone 01452 894300 (9.00am - 5.00pm Monday to Friday). The following websites may also be of use:

- [Young Minds](#)
- [Tic +](#)
- [Rethink self-harm](#)
- [Family lives](#)
- [Good thinking](#)

If you have a safeguarding concern, you can email DSL@strs.org.uk. This communication will go to the safeguarding leads in the School and will be managed in accordance with our safeguarding procedures. If you are unsure whether your concern would be considered a safeguarding issue or not, please just inform us of your concern and we will be able to source the appropriate level of support.

Heads of Key Stage are also available to support pupils and may be contacted as follows:

- Rhys Davies (Assistant Head i/c Key Stage 3) rmd@strs.org.uk
- Peter Daniel (Head of Upper School) pmd@strs.org.uk
- Matt Lynch (Head of Sixth Form) mtl@strs.org.uk

Careers and Preparation for University Entry

Mrs Morris will be writing to all Year 12 students and their parents with information about researching university courses and advice about preparation for the application process. She will also include further details about researching different career options. Please do not hesitate to contact her (after she has sent the initial email) should you require further information: clm@strs.org.uk

I very much hope that there is light at the end of the tunnel, but we are now at both a delicate and precarious stage in this pandemic. A pandemic that has placed strain on pupils, parents and colleagues but also has enabled us to be more determined to focus on the things that matter; indeed, perhaps especially on those things that are not easily measurable but which have never seemed more important. In such unprecedented times, I would like, once again, to thank parents and other members of the school community for their continued messages of support and good wishes.

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