



Smithdon High School
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Dear Parents

I am writing to update parents on the actions the school is taking in regard to the COVID-19 virus.

We are receiving daily updates from the Department for Education and Public Health England (NHS), and we are following any advice they issue to ensure the wellbeing of all our students and staff. The school has contingency arrangements in place to support students in the event of the Government issuing a notice for schools to close. In the meantime it is important to stress that people need to be proportional and considered in their response to this rapidly changing situation.

The school remains open as usual to all students. Students should ensure that they continue to help to keep themselves and others safe by following basic hygiene advice. Everyone should wash their hands regularly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and/or use alcohol sanitiser (available in every classroom).

As a precautionary measure the Year 11 parents' evening this Thursday is postponed. We will be providing each student with their report and other information relating to their progress. If parents of Year 11 students have a concern about their child's progress in a particular subject they should email the teacher directly for feedback. If they have a general concern about their child's progress, please email Mr Knott.

We fully appreciate that Year 11 students and parents may be particularly concerned in regard to summer examinations. The examination boards, Ofqual and JCQ are working on contingency plans in case of possible disruption to public examinations. Their advice at this time is for students and schools to continue with the published examination timetable as normal.

If we are directed to close, the school is making preparations for all students to be able to access work online via 'Show My Homework' and use Hegarty Maths, GCSEPod or Seneca Learning to support learning at home. Please check with your child that they have home access to their school email accounts as well as passwords and logins linked to their school accounts. If they do not, they should bring this to the attention of their form tutor immediately so this can be rectified. Year 11 will have work provided to support them with their examination preparation.

Planned school trips abroad are currently under review, in line with government advice. We hope the school will be in a position to update parents with regard to the planned school trip to France in July very soon. Until this is confirmed, we will not be asking for the final instalment to be paid. Upcoming trips within the UK are also being reviewed on a regular basis and we will keep you advised. The Silver D of E practice expedition due to take place on Thursday 26 March has unfortunately been postponed and alternative dates will be confirmed in due course.

As of today, there are no known confirmed COVID-19 cases at Smithdon High School.

If your child becomes unwell and is showing signs of illness, specifically; a high temperature and/or a new, continuous cough, then the advice from the NHS is to stay at home and self-isolate for the recommended time. Latest information can be found at: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Again, if you know your child has had direct exposure to a confirmed case of COVID-19 they are advised to remain self-isolated at home for the recommended time and inform the school.

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Any absence due to this illness will be authorised.

If your child is not ill, but is absent from school, the absence will not be authorised. We cannot make this decision for you, but advise you to phone 111 if you need any specific or further advice. If your child or a member of your family has a 'confirmed' case of COVID-19, please remember to advise the school as soon as possible.

Taking the above advice into consideration, we are requesting that parents and carers continue to send their child into school as normal. We will communicate with parents should this situation change.

We understand there will be a great deal of anxiety surrounding the COVID-19 outbreak. Please be assured that the school will continue to operate with the safety and wellbeing of our students and staff at the heart of any decisions we take.

Thank you for your understanding and support during this challenging time.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J Hirst', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Mr J Hirst
Headteacher