



## COVID-19 Letter to parents & Carers 17<sup>TH</sup> March 2020

Dear Parents & Carers,

As you are probably aware the government has significantly changed its advice regarding managing the COVID-19 (Coronavirus). At this moment in time the government isn't instructing schools to close. As a NOVA Education Trust Academy, we are aiming to maintain as normal a service as possible at this moment in time, but safeguarding pupils and staff is of paramount importance.

The difficulty for our Academy and indeed all schools nationally, is that some staff are not able to attend school because of their underlying health issues (as defined by the government in their most recent guidance) or because of their immediate family's health position. Areas identified by the recent guidance include, asthma diabetes and pregnancy. Already we can see that this is having a significant impact on our Academy staffing levels which offers significant challenge to our ongoing commitment to maintain the highest levels of educational provision that you have come to expect for your children.

As an Academy and as a wider trust, we have been placed in a hugely difficult position. As public servants we naturally want to maintain our service to all our learners but to do this we need our staff to be available at the workplace to provide that service. Unfortunately, following the recent government guidance, more and more staff are having to self-isolate on top of normal absence which provides us with an unprecedented level of challenge to maintain a normal school service level.

It is of critical importance to emphasise to parents and carers that any pupil or member of staff who is at a serious level of health risk due to underlying health conditions identified by the government **MUST NOT** attend school. This also applies to those who present with coronavirus symptoms as already outlined. Those who do will need to isolate for 14 days as stated by Public Health England and other medical advisory bodies.

Therefore, due to our present staffing position, we have reluctantly decided to take the following actions:

- Pupils in Years 9, 10 and 12 are **not to attend** school until further notice.
- Pupils in Years 7,8, 11 and 13 **are to attend** school as normal.
- For pupils who are at home, we will aim to maintain learning by setting work via the school's email system or Microsoft 'One Note' facilities.

We have prepared a series of training materials which will be emailed to all parents and carers and all pupils have received an information session prior to this decision and will be clear on the expectations of how they should access and complete work set.



Teachers have been tasked with providing lessons and resources via email with clear instructions on what work should be completed and pupils will be encouraged to reply to class teachers to engage regularly in dialogue around their home learning experience.

All parents and carers should receive copies of work via email to ensure that communication remains positive and that monitoring of activity can ensue.

Unfortunately, due to our current staffing situation, we have had to cancel our regular minibus run to the Fernwood estate and we would ask that parents and carers support to seek alternative arrangements to transport their children to and from the Academy for the foreseeable future.

Our site team has been significantly reduced as a result of the recent guidance provided and as such all enrichment activity is cancelled and pupils will be expected to exit the Academy by 3.30pm daily. This is to enable the Academy site to be made safe and secure at the end of the normal working day.

Parents and carers will need to be aware that we have also decided to cancel all Achievement Evenings including this week's Year 8 evening and Year 13 due to the government advice previously referred to.

For many parents and carers, the possible loss of school meals is a major area of concern. If the Academy is required to fully close to all pupils in all year groups, we will work with our catering suppliers to offer families some level of service that provides access to school meals. At this point in time however, we are unable to guarantee this service to families.

This is a hugely challenging time for the Academy and indeed all schools. We continue to react to an ever-changing landscape and remain committed to ensuring that our standards of service to all children in our care remain high. Staff are working tremendously hard to continue to support all pupils and I would encourage parents and carers to continue to communicate with class teachers, pastoral teams and colleagues from across the Academy to support our young people at this difficult time.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank you for your understanding and consideration in response to this unique situation. Your support is hugely valued, and we will continue to maintain a high level of contact with you as this situation unfolds.

Yours sincerely,

Andy Seymour  
(Headteacher)