

19 March 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

### **Update**

I am sure that you are fully aware of the news that we received from the government yesterday afternoon, that schools throughout the country will be closed to everyone except children of key workers and vulnerable children from Monday, 23 March.

At the time of writing, we are still awaiting final confirmation from the Government as to who might fall into these categories. However, we need to plan for this now.

### **Key Workers**

From Monday, we will be open for the children of key workers. In order to formulate a plan for this, please can you notify school by 9am tomorrow Friday, 20 March, if your child requires a place at school because BOTH parents/carers are key workers and you are unable to cater for them at home. Please email [enquiries@priory.lancs.sch.uk](mailto:enquiries@priory.lancs.sch.uk).

At present we have been advised that key workers include Lancashire school staff, workers in the NHS, delivery drivers delivering the food to our shops and emergency services workers. Please work on these guidelines for now.

The government will soon issue a full list of qualifying key worker roles and we will share this with you if it differs to the advised list above.

### **Vulnerable Pupils**

In addition, from Monday, we will provide a service for our more vulnerable pupils. Vulnerable pupils include those who have a social worker or those with Education, Health and Care Plans. Our pastoral team in school will contact families directly to discuss your individual circumstances and if needed, offer continued support in school for as long as is feasible.

**Children who do not fall into these groups should remain at home with appropriate care.**

### **Catering**

Please note, given the catering pressures, any pupils in school from Monday who are not eligible for Free School Meals, must bring their own packed lunch. This will also apply to school staff.

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## **Voucher scheme to support free school meals pupils**

The Government has announced that it will launch a voucher scheme to ensure that children who qualify for free school meals do not go hungry during the school shutdown. As soon as possible, they will put in place a national voucher system for every child who is eligible for free school meals. We are awaiting further clarification on how these plans will work and what the arrangements will be. As soon as these are clear, we will write again to inform you.

## **Easter Break**

Currently, schools are being asked to remain open over the planned Easter break. If feasible, we will aim to do this, but only to pupils of key workers. All other pupils will be expected to be at home for the Easter break as would normally be the case. We wish to support the fight against the virus, but we must remember that distancing is the key strategy.

## **Update on assessments and examinations**

Our thoughts are particularly with our Year 11 pupils. We know that they are totally overwhelmed by yesterday's announcement. Please know that we will continue to do all that we can to reassure, guide and support this amazing group of young people.

GCSEs will not take place in May or June but the government have made it clear that pupils will not be disadvantaged by this decision. We do not know what plans will be put in place at the moment, but we will do everything that we can to ensure no-one is disadvantaged by this announcement and that they all get the opportunity to continue onto the college/apprenticeship course of their choice.

I spoke to Year 11 this morning and said to them that we will, when the time allows, still look to host the important school-ending events such as the leavers assembly and the Prom so that we have the chance as a community to properly say goodbye to each other and celebrate their time at Priory. When these events take place, however, is dependent upon the developing situation.

## **An update on home learning**

Please can we ask that you encourage your son/daughter to follow their normal school timetable as much as possible and monitor the work that is being completed. Please continue to access our remote learning via the 'New Page – Pupil Remote Learning' banner at the top of our website home page [www.priory.lancs.sch.uk](http://www.priory.lancs.sch.uk) to access the information and instructions for this.

Both Sports England and the Youth Sports Trust have launched online resources to help keep children active for an hour a day as they stay at home.

Also, the BBC has announced that it will broadcast a range of special programmes, including educational shows, to support those who are forced to stay home amid the spread of the coronavirus. In response to the schools closures, daily educational programmes will be broadcast for different key stages or year groups, delivered through the BBC Red Button, iPlayer and Sounds app. BBC Sounds will feature two new daily educational podcasts, one for primary and one for secondary students, and BBC Bitesize will be expanded.

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BBC4 will also feature daily programmes in support of the GCSE curriculum.

## **Finally**

I would like to thank you personally for your continued support.

In addition to a highly dedicated staff team who have gone above and beyond what could realistically be expected in recent days, I have been deeply moved by the encouragement, support and kind words we have received in this time of uncertainty.

We will continue to strive to provide the opportunities for our pupils to flourish even if we cannot be physically present in the building.

I continue to wish you and your families all the very best,

Yours faithfully



**Mr M Eastham**  
**Headteacher**

