



# Bramcote College

A member of The White Hills Park Trust

## **Message to parents with regard to COVID-19.**

**Emailed to all parents and carers of Bramcote College students  
for whom we hold a valid email address.**

**17th March 2020**

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Dear Parent/Carer

The picture concerning COVID-19 is changing very rapidly. Government advice is updated daily and there is a great deal of media speculation and social media conversations which do not help in providing clarity. There has been much discussion about the possibility of school closures, despite the fact that if schools are forced to close, then challenges will be presented to the country as well as to individuals and families. As long as the government advice is that schools remain open to serve our young people and their families, we will do everything we can to comply. However, it is clear that closure is a possibility, either because of a change of official advice or because we are unable to safely staff the school/ As a result, we have been reviewing our plans in the event of closure.

Even if we are forced to close, we have been planning, as far as we are able, for the ongoing education of students, particularly those in exam years. Our primary sources of advice are from the Department of Education and Public Health England. We will continue to update our website with the most recent advice.

### **Recent government advice**

The most recent government advice is that anyone who lives with someone who has a cough or a temperature should stay at home for 14 days. This advice may have an impact on your decision to send your child to school. We would recommend that you err on the side of caution and if your child has symptoms, no matter how minor, you should keep them off school. If your child is off school would you kindly contact school through the normal procedure – 0115 916 8900. Likewise, if they display symptoms in school, we will contact you and ask you to collect them and keep them at home for 14 days, We have also shared this information with staff and any visitors to the site.

We are doing everything we can to keep school as safe as possible, including through additional cleaning and protective measures, and by working with students to make sure they follow sensible hygiene advice. We are also supporting their mental health by remaining calm and positive, and trying to make their school day as normal and reassuring as possible.

## **School closure**

The government are under increasing pressure from the media to close schools in line with the governments of other European countries. At the same time, we are entering exam season for our GCSE and A level students. We are closely monitoring Ofqual, the exams regulator, to ensure that our contingency plans are fit for purpose. Currently, no decision has been made regarding anticipated exam dates and, until we hear otherwise, we will continue to prepare our students for these important exams. We are aware that many students and families will be feeling anxious about this uncertainty, particularly those for whom exam results will determine their next steps. Because of this, it is only right that we prioritise the delivery of education to Years 11 and 13.

There are two potential scenarios. Firstly, it may become impractical and unsafe to run a full school timetable should levels of staff absence become too great to manage. In this case, we recognise the need for teaching staff to focus on the education of our exam groups but also of Year 7. We recognise that many of these students may be cared for by grandparents and, given the fact that child care may become an issue, we would endeavour to education Year 7s. Years 8 and 9 may be asked to stay at home in which case we would be providing some distance learning materials.

The second scenario will be if and when we follow government directive to close schools. We understand the impact this will have on our most vulnerable students and on families where parents are needing to work, particularly those responding in a health care or emergency setting. Currently we are planning to deliver differing levels of support according to need and key stage. Advice we are receiving would suggest that students in key stage 3 will need a mixture of activities they can do unsupervised such as reading, access to some online learning and some directed work from teachers. In order to access this, students will need to use email. We are aware that not all students have access to technology and we are currently preparing paper-based resources for those. Key stage 4 and 5 will access work via email and Microsoft Teams in order to prepare them for exams this year and next.

## **School Trips and Enrichment activities**

Advice from government is that school trips and additional activities are not advised. We have ended all additional activities, including meetings, visits, sporting fixtures and clubs. Given the issues we may have with staffing and the importance of planning for possible closure, we believe that this is the wisest course of action. We have also, unfortunately, had to postpone our school production.

This is a time of uncertainty and challenge. Our first priority is the health and welfare of our children, their families and our staff. One of the difficulties in planning is that we do not know if and when the next steps will happen and we do not know if, or for how long we will be closed. What I can assure you of though is that staff at Bramcote College will roll their sleeves up and do all they can to support you and your family.

Yours faithfully

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