



**The South Wolds
Academy
and Sixth Form**

16th March 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

Further to my letter dated 2nd March, may I thank you for your ongoing support as we all face the global coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. As you will be aware, the UK is now attempting to delay the spread of COVID-19. As a result of changes to the Public Health England guidance we are reviewing our guidance and actions in school and will continue to do so, based on any updates the government release.

Please be assured that our absolute priority remains the health and wellbeing of everyone within our school community. It is likely that the majority of young people would experience very minor or even no symptoms were they to contract COVID-19. However, we are mindful that this is not the case for everyone, and of the need to protect high risk groups within our community, and to reduce pressure on our health service.

Please support us in our approach:

1. Everyone in our school community is expected to follow good personal hygiene routines with regard to hand washing and coughs and sneezes. **Please continue to reinforce the importance of these good hygiene routines within your family.**
2. Based on the Public Health England guidance for Educational Settings, **staff, young people and children should stay at home if they are unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature to avoid spreading infection to others.** Otherwise they should attend education or work as normal. Self-isolation is seven days from when the symptoms first started. **Students, staff, parents and members of the community should not come to the school site if they have been in close contact with someone with a diagnosis or symptoms of COVID-19 within the last 14 days.** It is essential that parents notify school as soon as possible if their child is absent from school and give the reason for the absence. If anyone becomes unwell with COVID-19 symptoms while on the school site they will be sent home.
3. Whilst current UK government policy means that the majority of people with COVID-19 symptoms will no longer be tested, we will share any information about diagnosed or suspected cases of COVID-19 within our school community, as we do with other contagious illnesses. Equally, **please do make us aware if you know that someone in your family or who you have had close contact with has diagnosed COVID-19, or symptoms of COVID-19.** This will help us to understand the level of risk within our school community and to inform our decision-making.

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We are aware that this is a rapidly changing situation. We will continue to provide factual, accurate information for our students about coronavirus and allow them to ask questions and express their views and concerns.

School Trips and Activities:

This outbreak compromises an aspect of our school that we pride ourselves on and know is hugely valued by students, staff and parents - our trips, visits and additional activities. We appreciate that it is very disappointing if we have to cancel trips or activities, or not to offer some of the opportunities that we normally do, but we are going to have to take some difficult decisions prioritising minimising health risks.

As you may be aware, the government is now advising against all school trips to other countries. This is because trip leaders would face significant challenges in making arrangements to ensure children's welfare, should adult supervisors or children be required to self-isolate. There is no end date in place for this advice.

The Department for Education is not currently advising against either residential or non-residential school trips within the UK. We have been asked to refresh our risk assessments to take into account the latest health advice and ensure measures are in place and agreed with parents in case children or adult supervisors believe they have been exposed to COVID-19 and exhibit symptoms that require self-isolation. However, in this rapidly changing situation this means that we are likely to cancel any trips or activities where students would be mixing with large numbers of students from other schools or members of the public as a precautionary measure. We are also unlikely to arrange any new trips or activities off site, unless we are confident that the risk is no greater than being in school. We will contact parents separately with regard to individual activities that are already planned.

We have reviewed arrangements for Parents Evening on Wednesday 18th March and regretfully will be cancelling this event. If any parents wish to contact their child's teacher then please follow the links on the Parental Queries section of the school website.

Foreign Travel:

Please note that as of 12th March 2020, you should consult the latest travel advice from the FCO and Public Health England (PHE) Public Health matters guidance before travelling abroad with your child(ren) of school age. If you plan to travel overseas, you should notify school so we are aware of your intention to travel, and are able to provide you with the latest advice and guidance.

Year 11 and 13 Exam Preparation:

We are continuing to prepare our Year 11 and Year 13 students for their GCSE and A-level exams in the summer, in line with the most recent guidance from OFQUAL on 6th March, which states: "We recognise that students, parents, schools and colleges will be concerned about the possible impact of coronavirus on the 2020 summer exam series. Our advice at this time is to continue to prepare for exams and other assessments as normal. We continue to work closely with exam boards, other regulators and the Department for Education and we have met to plan for a range of scenarios, as the public would expect. Our overriding priorities are fairness to students this summer and keeping disruption to a minimum. It is still many weeks until exams start and we will issue updated advice if necessary, giving schools and colleges as much notice as possible."

It is important to note that OFQUAL have a contingency date of 24th June 2020. Please ensure that your Year 11 and/or 13 child is available to sit exams up until and including this date and contact our Exams Officer, Mrs Shenton, if there are any issues with this.

School Closure Plans:

The government has indicated that they do not currently intend to close schools as part of their delay strategy, although they have suggested that this could be considered at some point in the future. There is also the possibility that the school could at some point have a full or partial closure for health and safety reasons, due to high levels of staff absence, or concerns of an outbreak within our community.

Whilst we hope to be able to keep the school open as usual, please be aware that there may be higher levels of staff absence than usual.

We are developing a contingency plan to ensure that students can learn remotely at home if necessary. This will work through our normal communication systems, so this is a good opportunity to ensure that you and your child(ren) can access these at home.

Our main method of communication with parents is via email and text message. We also share information via our website, school app, facebook page and twitter. **Please ensure that we have an up to date email address and contact mobile telephone number for you, and contact school if you need any support with this.**

In the event of a school closure we will set work for students on Show My Homework. This is a website which can be accessed on any device with internet. **Please ensure that both you and your child can access Show My Homework at home and contact school if you require support with this.**

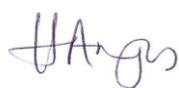
If you do not have internet access at home please contact your child's tutor or Head of Year so that we can make alternative arrangements for setting work for your child in the event of a school closure.

We are developing our use of other websites that support student learning and enable them to get feedback, such as My Maths, Seneca and Google Classrooms. Ensuring that your child can access the websites that they are using at school at home will support their independent learning and ensure that they are well prepared for accessing learning remotely if necessary.

Please try to ensure that your child has a place to study at home, establishing good study routines for homework and revision will help them to work independently for a period of time if required.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information. Please do get in touch if you have any questions or there is anything else that we can do to support you or your child(ren).

Yours sincerely



Halina Angus
Head Teacher