

12 March 2020

Dear Parents / Carers; Students and Staff,

## COVID-19 Update

Following considerable media coverage about the Coronavirus I thought it was appropriate to update you on the current and future actions of Giles Academy to reassure you, without any over-reaction, that we will do our utmost to keep everyone in our care safe.

Our first point is to reassure you that we are following daily guidance from the NHS and Department for Education (DfE). The Senior Leadership Team are meeting every morning to discuss and mitigate risk where possible. The current message from Public Health England indicates that there is no need to panic, despite rising numbers of cases, which were anticipated, the risk to healthy children remains low and we will update our parents / carers; students and staff as messages change.

This is a new virus with no vaccination yet available and the best advice for an education setting like Giles Academy is to maximise hygiene and minimise the spread of the virus through effective hand washing and sanitisation. We would like to thank the students for their commitment to the process of good hygiene and their ongoing exemplary behaviour as the ongoing news regarding the Coronavirus has emerged.

In addition, we have asked our cleaners to ensure that they carry out deep cleans of all regularly used surfaces daily, rather than concentrate on areas of floor cleaning. Additionally, the site staff will be circulating around the school to ensure that toilets, handles and high traffic areas are cleaned regularly throughout the day.

As you would expect there are many existing school trips and activities planned to drive the cultural education of the students. We will individually risk assess each of these events and make appropriate decisions to ensure the ongoing safety of the students. All planned residential trips will be under review, which will especially include all overseas travel.

You will appreciate there is a balance to strike in order to minimise disruption whilst reducing the risk of exposure and acting responsibly. Therefore, the Senior Leadership team are currently planning for the potential of a temporary closure by the Government, as you can imagine this scenario has many implications for all students but particularly for those who are soon to commence their GCSE and Post-16 exams.

Our response would be:

Contingency Planning – In the event of closure/ partial closure:

- Communication with Parents & Carers. We will continue to communicate in 2 ways:
  1. By posting important messages on our school website
  2. By sending letters home to parents/carers via students

I would ask that you ensure all contact details addresses are up to date and if in doubt please provide these details on a slip of paper to Reception, marked clearly with your name and we will update our system.

- Teaching & Learning

Year 11 12/ 13

We are in the process of establishing our system which will enable students to access lesson resource materials via Show My Homework. This will include lessons being set, and students being able to make contact with staff members. In addition, students will be able to email staff with any detailed questions.

The teaching staff will make sure that all students have access to folders and resources over the next few days / weeks so they are prepared – i.e. for Year 11 to take home key assessment folders.

Key Stage 3 and Year 10:

Students will receive lesson content and associated work via Show My Homework. As you are aware this is the site that allows teachers to set work, post attachments, link to films and set quizzes and assignments. Students will be expected to log onto the site and access work to complete. We expect parents and students to access the site to check progress.

- Examinations:

We recognise that students and parents will be extremely concerned about the possible impact on the 2020 summer exam series. The advice from the Government is to continue to prepare for exams and other assessments as normal, if the school is temporarily closed, we expect all students to study independently for the same time that they would have done if we were open. We will be available to support our students throughout this process and would urge parents / carers and students to make contact with the school using the correct email tab for the Year Group / Year Lead with any questions.

- Staff illness:

If staff absence levels reach unprecedented levels, we may have to consolidate classes or consider partial closure of the school. You are aware that this will be our absolutely last option and the Senior Leadership team will have considered all other options before making this decision.

Further consideration has been given to the potential for partial closure should staffing levels be compromised during the peak of the epidemic. We would prioritise the examination preparation for the Year 11 should partial closure become necessary.

I would like to reassure all parents/carers; students and staff, that we have already identified those staff and students who potentially may be more vulnerable to COVID-19 and we will be making further contingency plans for these individuals ie: this will include more focus on their medical needs and support for families who may need support with food and provisions in light of a school closure.

Finally, we request your patience and understanding whilst dealing with a rapidly changing picture and also in reiterating the importance of personal hygiene as the most important way we can tackle this virus.

Please contact the school if you have any further questions.

Yours sincerely,



SAM PELL  
Assistant Headteacher