

13<sup>th</sup> March 2020

**Parents and Guardians  
TQEA Students**

Dear Parents,

I'm writing to update you on the school's continuing response to Coronavirus (COVID-19).

You will be aware that the first cases of the virus have now been reported in Warwickshire.

We are therefore taking sensible precautions at the present time including giving advice to pupils through our normal pastoral system. We would be grateful if you would support this effort at home by emphasising the importance of washing hands, catching coughs and sneezes and disposing of used tissues. We are also asking visitors to school to avoid unnecessary physical contact including shaking hands.

Like all other schools, our ability to give definitive advice is hampered by the uncertainty surrounding the potential spread and impact of the virus, both in the UK and around the world. Nevertheless, the senior leadership team continues to meet regularly, and have developed contingency plans for a variety of possible scenarios. Please forgive the length of this letter as I share these with you; my hope in doing so is that all members of the community will be able to take confidence that we are well-prepared and will also be able to make their own plans accordingly.

**Guidelines**

- The school's senior leadership team will continue to meet regularly to determine changes to the level of risk and assess all new information
- We will only act on credible, verifiable information and evidence
- The safety and well-being of our students and staff will be our paramount consideration in all decisions and mitigation strategies
- The School will follow (and not pre-empt) the directives of the UK government and all official agencies

**Strategies**

**Reducing contact to minimise potential spread of the virus?**

**Are visitors still allowed in the school?**

Since news of the virus first broke, we have been restricting visits to the school for anyone coming from a high risk region. This remains our protocol at present. However, if the UK Government moves from a containment to a delay strategy, prohibitions on non-urgent visits may increase. Our general advice is not to visit the school if it isn't necessary or if the matter can be deferred or dealt with remotely.

### **Will the school still play sporting fixtures?**

As above. Part of the UK government's delay strategy may be the cancellation of mass events such as sports matches. Whether school sport would fit into this category is unclear at this time, but we are prepared for either eventuality. At present, our fixtures continue, with the added precaution that we are in touch with opposition teams beforehand to ensure that they have had no medical concerns amongst any of their players or supporters.

### **What about the school trips that are planned for the coming months?**

We will follow the government advice regarding travel.

### **What happens if my child travels to another country?**

It is possible that the UK government will soon start to advise against non-essential overseas travel. As we are in normal term time, we do not expect students to be absent from school anyway. However, the Easter break takes place in April, and many families will still be planning overseas holidays. If the situation has not changed by the time we return for the summer term, we will be requiring all families to disclose any overseas travel and will be requiring a 14-day self-isolation period for anyone meeting the government and public health guidelines with regard to this.

## **Closure**

### **Will the school close?**

We would only close the school if directed to do so by the authorities or should we be unable to open for health and safety reasons such as staffing levels. At present, that is not the preferred option of the UK government.

### **What happens to my child's education if the school closes for a while?**

The school will endeavour to provide suitable work and, where possible, guidance via electronic methods (e.g. Google classrooms, email interaction and the provision of self-directed study opportunities). We will ensure that every effort is made to support year 11 students in the most productive ways available to us and will expect them to remain committed and focussed in working with us at this crucial time in their studies. As a precautionary measure and in order to prepare for the possibility of closure we have started to issue year 11 with additional materials such as past papers and revision booklets. Guidance on how and when these should be attempted will be made available through the school website in the event of closure.

### **What about the upcoming public examinations?**

If the GCSE examinations are in any way altered or delayed, all schools throughout the country will be in the same position. We are aware that examination boards are already in discussion regarding possible alternatives should the normal schedule be impacted, and we will advise our own students as soon as we are informed of any changes. However, we remain confident that no student will ultimately be disadvantaged.

## **Communication**

### **How will the school communicate updates or changes in plans to families?**

We will continue to update parents via email, text and through our website. Any urgent messages will also be posted on the website and our Twitter feed. Parents will understand that if the school is closed there is a

significant increase in pressure on many staff as we work with any new arrangement; they may also have their own childcare issues or other complications. However, we remain committed to answering your queries as promptly as possible and would still encourage you to make contact if you have a concern. We may not get back to you as quickly as usual, but we will always respond.

It is important that our community is calm and pragmatic at this time and I am extremely grateful to all associated with TQEA for your level-headed support. The school continues to act on guidance from Public Health England and we will endeavour to keep students, staff and parents informed as appropriate. We receive regular information from the Department for Education and from Warwickshire Local Authority. Parents can access information on the various websites, given below:

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/travel-advice-novel-coronavirus>

<https://twitter.com/educationgovuk>

Staff, parents and young people can also contact the Department for Education's new helpline as follows:

- Phone: 0800 046 8687
- Email: [DfE.coronavirushelpline@education.gov.uk](mailto:DfE.coronavirushelpline@education.gov.uk)
- Opening hours: 8am to 6pm (Monday to Friday)

Yours sincerely,



Andrew Wilson  
Executive Principal  
The Queen Elizabeth Academy