



# St Martin-in-the-Fields High School for Girls

11-19 Church of England Academy Founded 1699

*Service Compassion Justice Perseverance*

Friday 20 March 2020

## Update on arrangements for school closure from Friday 20 March 2020

Dear Families,

I am writing to update you about our arrangements for the school closure which begins on Monday 23 March for the vast majority of students. We will close for an undefined length of time and do not know when the school will reopen. We will keep you informed via parent mail and on our website as we receive information from the government.

We know that this news has come as a shock and it will cause difficulties and stress for you and your daughter but we want to reassure you that we have made careful and detailed plans to support you and your daughter through this unprecedented situation as best as we possibly can.

Your daughter will receive remote access to learning activities in all her subjects alongside a bespoke pastoral programme of support, guidance and prayer underpinned by our values of service, compassion, justice and perseverance.

Please note this will be a long letter in order to ensure that you are fully informed so I would be grateful if you could read to the end. I have set the letter out in sections to make it easier to read.

### Onsite provision

As per my previous letters, on site provision will be available for key categories of children that have been identified by the government. Unfortunately, we cannot cater for children who do not fall into these groups so they should remain at home with appropriate care. The government has said that the scientific advice shows that schools are safe for a small number of children to continue attending but believe that asking others to stay away will help to slow the spread of the virus. They have asked parents to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and asked schools to remain open only for those children who absolutely need to attend. They feel that the fewer children making the journey to school, and the fewer children in educational settings, the lower the risk that the virus can spread and infect vulnerable individuals in wider society.

The key categories of children identified by the government include parents whose work is critical to the COVID-19 response such as those who work in health and social care and in other key sectors. Please see my previous letter for the comprehensive list. Many parents working in these sectors may be able to ensure their child is kept at home and every child who can be safely cared for at home should be.

Our onsite provision will consist of supervised sessions by a few members of staff in mixed aged groups. They will continue with their lessons which have been set by their teachers on Google Classroom as their peers will be doing from home. Please note, this provision, in the short term will be at St Martin's, in the medium and long term it may take place in another school in Lambeth. Your daughter will also be able to continue with her learning at home through Google Classroom and communicate with her teacher via Google Classroom or through email.

**Headteacher** Mrs Beverley Stanislaus B.Ed. NPQH

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**WITH LOVE AND LEARNING**



We will have minimal catering facilities with limited choice, there will be no break service so students will need to bring a snack. They can purchase lunch (£2.40 for a main meal). It will be provided at no cost if your child is entitled to a free school meal. The school day will run as normal from 8.30am to 3.00pm.

### **Off-site provision**

We are providing home learning via Google Classroom for all students to continue their studies at home. We expect them to follow their usual timetable. Teachers will be uploading work and assessing this on a regular basis. If your child is experiencing difficulties with her learning, she can email her teacher or communicate via Google Classroom. Over the past couple of days, we have retrained students on how to access and use Google Classroom. Work packs will be made available to students who do not have access to ICT facilities at home and you should contact the school if your child completes all the work that has been set and requires additional learning activities.

We will not provide live/Skype lessons due to the possible safeguarding concerns that surround the delivery of these for both students and staff.

It is important that you try and keep your child to a strict routine, by following her normal timetable she will be able to keep up with the set lessons and have the best possible positive and productive experience. We will also include some fitness support via video and some daily exercises that your daughter can participate in.

The government has advised that while schools are closed, parents should do everything they can to ensure children are not mixing socially in a way which can continue to spread the virus. They should observe the same social distancing principles as adults.

### **Free School Meals**

We will ensure that all students on Free School Meals continue to receive these. In this current situation we have decided that the best course of action is to provide you with a voucher that you can use in the local supermarket. If your daughter is eligible for this, please make arrangements to come into school to sign and collect your voucher. The school will be open every day from 8.30am to 3.00pm. Please note, the volume of voucher purchasing has increased, therefore, although we have been promised delivery on Tuesday 24 March we cannot be certain of this so please call first. If your daughter requires a school lunch on Monday 23 and Tuesday 24 March, please let me know in advance so we can prepare sufficient meals and they can come into school at 12.30pm to eat and leave the site between 1.00-1.15. Your daughter will not be eligible to remain on site beyond this time. Early next week I will send a separate letter via parentmail detailing how to come in and collect your Free School Meal Vouchers.

### **Public Examinations**

GCSE and A Level exams will not take place this summer. In a press release issued this afternoon, the government has said that the exam boards will be asking teachers, who know their students best, to submit their judgement about the grade that they believe the student would have received if exams had gone ahead. To produce this, teachers will take into account a range of evidence and data including performance in mock exams and non-exam assessment – clear guidance on how to do this fairly and robustly will be provided to schools at a later date.

The exam boards will then combine this information with other relevant data, including prior attainment, and use it to produce a calculated grade for each student, which will be a best assessment of the work they have put in. Ofqual (The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation) and exam boards will be having further discussions with teachers' representatives before finalising an approach to ensure that it is as fair as possible and more information will be provided at a later date. The government has said that their aim is to provide these calculated grades to students before the end of July, however, as things are currently uncertain this may be subject to change and we will update you as we find out more.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Year 11 and Year 13 and we congratulate them on their hard work over the last 5 or 7 years.

Today was a very emotional day for all of us, staff and students. We have had to muster up all our strength to keep our students calm and help them understand and try to make sense of what is going on. We know that an undefined period of school closure will be a challenge to you as parents as much as it is for us as teachers as we all struggle with any closure even if it is just for one day. Whilst we can never fully compensate for the loss of school time and students learning, we feel that the plans we have put in place will enable the St Martin's family to meet the challenges of this unprecedented situation together.

*"The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you. He will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid. Do not be discouraged"* Deuteronomy 31:8

Blessings

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Beverley Stanislaus', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Beverley Stanislaus  
Headteacher