

18 March 2020

Dear Parent

As you will be aware, the Government has this afternoon announced the closure of all schools in England from the end of Friday 20 March due to the Coronavirus pandemic. Our school premises will continue as normal tomorrow and Friday. The Spring term will still end on 1<sup>st</sup> April and we are planning on the summer term commencing as previously advised on 22nd April, whether physically at school or virtually.

We are exploring the means by which we could offer supervised care for the children of key workers. A full list of key worker categories will be published tomorrow by the Cabinet so please let me know by the end of the school day tomorrow Thursday 19 March if you feel you may fall into this category and we will confirm details shortly. Please use the [info@stmarys-henley.co.uk](mailto:info@stmarys-henley.co.uk) email address.

I appreciate this news is unsettling but want to reassure you of the steps we are taking to provide support for our pupils and you as parents during the closure. As you know, we've been working closely with our Cognita colleagues in Asia, where some countries have had mandatory school closures for many weeks and also more recently in Spain and Switzerland. Our plan for St. Mary's is informed by the practice they've put in place and we are confident we have an effective strategy for our children to continue learning. We have recently refreshed the digital technology in our school and conducted training in its use which means our teaching staff are well equipped to make the transition to digital learning for your child(ren).

I will be in touch tomorrow with specific details about the children's online learning programme, which will be delivered via SeeSaw. Clearly this will be a new way of working and learning for us all and we expect to adapt the programme as we go.

We appreciate that there will be an impact on parents and our plan includes advice for you. With that in mind, our Group Wellbeing Director Beth Kerr has prepared the attached 'Be Well Tips' for parents on supporting your child during a school closure.

Thank you in advance for your support at this challenging time. My staff have been preparing well for the possibility of a closure. All my efforts are concentrated on two priorities: maintaining the wellbeing of our children and staff and ensuring the continuity of the children's education in the days or weeks to come. I could not be more proud of my team and the way in which they have coped during these past weeks and the way in which they have maintained normality with a positive can do attitude whilst I know they have also been anxious and worried for their own families and loved ones.

All teachers and office staff will be on their school email address and will be contactable either directly or through the school office. We will continue to communicate closely with you throughout the closure and will update as soon as we have more information. Please do not hesitate to contact me personally at [rob.harmer@stmarys-henley.co.uk](mailto:rob.harmer@stmarys-henley.co.uk) if you have any further questions.

Kind regards



Rob Harmer  
Headmaster