

19.02.2020

Dear Parent / Carer,

Thank you for your patience today as we have waited for updates from national and local government on the most recent decisions.

I started the day today by visiting all of our year 11 and year 13 students. I can only imagine how difficult it has been for them processing the decision to cancel the summer exams. This morning it appeared possible they may be delayed but as the day has gone on it has been confirmed that the examinations have been cancelled. The students have handled the decisions with astonishing maturity and stoicism. I am so proud of them for the way each one has dealt with such a difficult day.

I have reassured all of our affected students that we will fight tooth and nail to secure a fair outcome for them. At the moment, there is a commitment for students to be awarded grades in the summer although we are waiting for detail on the process of how these grades are to be collected.

I must also make you aware that it is looking increasingly unlikely that it will be possible to host our annual school prom. Although it is scheduled for June, the time frames the government are discussing strongly suggest that we will not be able to go ahead with our celebrations. I know this will leave a real gap in the students' end of school experience. Once the situation has become clearer, we will make a final decision and if it is not possible to go ahead, we will see if we can find an alternative way to bring the year group back together and say goodbye properly.

The government announced yesterday that schools will close to the vast majority of students from Friday 20th March. The reason for this decision is to slow the spread of the virus across the country and it is important we make every effort possible at this time to reduce exposure for everyone. I have decided with great reluctance that we will close at 12.30pm tomorrow to all year groups. This is to allow the staff who are still in school a small window of opportunity to prepare for the function of the school on Monday. The new provision will not look or feel like school normally does but we are working hard to make sure it is a safe, meaningful and enjoyable experience for the very small numbers of students who will still access school after this date. I would also like to provide staff with additional time to prepare and deliver electronic materials for the 1000 plus families who will be working at home from next week.

Schools have been tasked with three main functions.

1. Providing interim support for those families who access free school meals. We have already been in contact with all our families who are eligible for additional support explaining how we are going to do this. I am delighted that so many people have felt able to take up our support offer and we will make sure the process runs smoothly.

2. Providing access to school for the most vulnerable students. The government has described this category of students as those who have an EHCP and those who have been allocated a social worker. If we believe you fall into this category you will be contacted directly by the school to discuss your options
3. Providing access to school for the children of key workers. The government has yet to define key workers and their roles. However, I have laid out the process we will use to decide if a family is eligible for access to the school below to help you decide if you and your circumstances are likely to fit the criteria once they are released.

I must emphasise that school will close on Friday and from the following Monday only families with a confirmed offer of a place can access school. I would also like to remind you that the health guidance on isolation for those who are ill and isolating, self-isolating households and preventative isolation for those with pre-existing health conditions take precedent and if you are affected you should follow the guidelines and not attend school even if you are offered a place.

I realise how difficult this must be for some of you and the pressure this will bring on some households. The national decisions have been made to reduce the opportunities for transmitting the virus to a minimum. I would also like to explain that the staffing in school has further reduced and our ability to function will be carefully monitored over the coming days and weeks.

Once again, your support and patience has been invaluable, and I will always be grateful for the way you have responded during this time

Your sincerely,

Craig Yates

Headteacher

Flow chart below is to help you in decision making on emergency school place offers. If you are an eligible key worker and wish to take up a place please contact the school on Headteacher@buxton.derbyshire.sch.uk and make sure you put the word emergency offer in the title. We will not be able to confirm any applications for places until the government releases its list. Any applications that do not meet the criteria cannot be accepted.

In the mail please confirm your name, your child's name, if there is no other adult family member who can support with childcare and your field of work.

All offers of school places are subject to the capacity of the school and we may need to prioritise provision according to need should the number of staff available fall significantly. Please only use a place if you really need it, they are very valuable.

