



South York
MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST

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Dear Parent/Carer

School Closures

As you will probably now know, the government announced an unprecedented decision tonight concerning the indefinite closure of schools from this Friday. In the midst of these worrying and volatile times, I would like to reassure you that this decision has been taken to reduce social interaction and to limit the spread of the Coronavirus rather than because of a particular risk to children and young people.

While schools were expecting an announcement on school closures, the pace and nature of this decision means we do not yet have full details to answer all the questions you may have. We can, however, confirm the following:

- All Trust schools will close indefinitely for most pupils from this Friday
- Schooling will continue to be provided for children whose parents are recognised as key workers, those who have social workers and those pupils who have Education and Health Care Plans (EHCPs). Details of what constitutes a key worker will be published by the Cabinet Office later today. This status will include NHS staff, emergency services staff and delivery drivers. We are working with the LA and Trusts across the city to arrange interim school provision for these pupils and the staffing for this. It is important to note that this provision is likely to be concentrated in a few sites in the city and therefore may not be in your local school. Further details will be given to those families involved in this as soon as it is available, along with what offer will be available for the Easter holiday period.
- Our schools will make arrangements to support pupils with free school meals until the national voucher system comes into operation. Individual schools will give you details of their support but we are likely to operate a voucher system to ensure families have speedy access to support. We are currently working on the details of this and will be in contact with the families affected as soon as we have further details.
- No SATs assessments, GCSE or A level examinations will take place this summer. I fully appreciate the worry and particular distress this announcement will have for students sitting GCSE and A levels given the importance of the outcomes of these exams for future progression routes. While there is lots of speculation about the use of mock exams and predicted grades to calculate outcomes for individual students, we have not yet received any information from OFQUAL or the government on how outcomes will be determined. Please be assured that we will share this information with you as soon as we have it. I appreciate the nervousness and anxiety that this

uncertainty must cause but please remember that every GCSE and A level student in the country is in a similar situation and that universities, schools and colleges will all be aware of this situation and will take this into account in their decision making on places to offer. I am confident that both OFQUAL and the government will act in the manner that best reflects student interests in this issue. I know how hard many of our students have worked and that they will be hugely disappointed at not having the chance to perform to their best in the examinations. It is crucial that we support and seek to ease the stress on our young people at this time.

I totally appreciate the worry that the lack of definitive answers on some of these issues will be causing. Please be assured that we will provide you with further information and clarification as soon as we are able to. We wish to provide you with what assurances we can in these troubling times. In addition to this central information, individual school Headteachers will update you on the developing situation within their schools by direct contact and via the school websites.

I must end by paying tribute to all our school staff who are working incredibly hard to provide education and support at what is the most demanding time I can ever remember. I must particularly acknowledge the outstanding work completed by our Headteachers and senior leaders in these most difficult and pressurised of times and to appeal for your full support for our school leaders and staff at this unprecedented time. They are working tirelessly to do their best for our children and young people. They have both my admiration and appreciation for the work they are doing in this.

Thank you for your continued support and cooperation in working together to ensure the safety and well-being of all those in our community. You have my very best wishes for your family.

Yours faithfully,



Lorna Savage
Trust CEO