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Dear Parents/Carers

Like me, you will no doubt be digesting yesterday's announcement from the government about school closures and examinations.

FACTS

To ensure we all have the same facts, the announcements were:

- That **schools will be closed** to the vast majority of students across England from Monday (i.e. Friday 20th March will be the last day schools are open).
- That all examinations scheduled for May and June this year have been **cancelled**.
- That students due to take examinations will be credited in some way for their efforts.
- That schools will be asked to stay open to look after children who are in vulnerable groups and of key workers where childcare is required. This will include a facility over the Easter holiday for the children of key frontline workers.

UNKNOWN

What we **do not** yet know is:

- Exactly which students the school will remain open for. 'Key workers' has not yet been fully defined.
- How this will be managed.
- How students will be credited for their GCSEs, A Levels and other qualifications.

What have we done today?

This morning we have held assemblies for Year 11 and 13 students. We have explained to them what is going on and provided reassurance that we will make sure they receive credit for all their hard work. We have also promised them that we will mark the end of their time at school at some point. We can still have a Prom (Y11) and Leavers' Ball (Y13), just perhaps not when we planned.

We had an extended tutor time for all students in school so that they could discuss their anxieties and ask questions. We will continue to talk to them and give reassurance.

What Year 11 and 13 have been told to do next

We have told Year 11 and 13 that they must consider themselves to be **completing their courses** up until **7th May 2020**, when exam leave was scheduled to start.

We have asked Year 11 and 13 students to begin putting together a **portfolio of work** for all their subjects. Teachers will work with them over the next two days to discuss what this might include. The purpose of this portfolio is:



1. To demonstrate what they have learnt and achieved in their qualifications.
2. To have something to feel proud of as an outcome of their hard work.
3. To take forward into the next stage of their education as evidence of their achievements.

We will be asking students to submit this work to us when complete. Please be assured that any grades awarded will not be contingent on the quality of this portfolio. However, we will consider how we can recognise this work.

After 7th May, they will be in a transition phase to prepare for next year. We will consider what students might be able to usefully do to help them prepare for Sixth Form, college or an apprenticeship.

We believe it is very important for students that they have a chance to finish their courses and have an end date that is not forced upon us by circumstances beyond our control.

What happens from next week?

The senior leadership team are meeting this afternoon to plan school closure. I will write to you tomorrow with details of how this will be managed. I will also set out which students will be able to access school facilities and how this will be managed.

Children on free school meals

The government is co-ordinating a plan to ensure that all children on free school meals receive vouchers which can be redeemed at local shops. Whilst this gets up and running, we are going to organise vouchers for you. Further information will follow.

Communications and enquiries

Understandably, parents are anxious and have lots of questions. We have received a large number of enquiries from parents individually with questions we do not yet have the answers to. To help us manage this situation and prioritise students' immediate needs, we will be proceeding in the following way:

- We are managing the school in the **short term**, but planning about the **next period** of time. This *'deal with the present, plan for what's next'* approach is standard crisis management.
- This means we are dealing with **today and tomorrow**, and planning for the **next four weeks** (to the end of the Easter holidays).
- We do not have enough information or time to plan for what is beyond this time period.
- **We will provide you with the information you need, when we are ready to. However, there are many things we do not yet know. As soon as we have facts and definite plans, we will communicate them to you.**

Thank you for your kind words and support. We will continue to do all we can to support students and reassure them during this difficult time.

Yours sincerely



Matthew Evans
Headteacher