

Friday 20th March 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

As a result of the Government directive, supported by Public Health UK, we will be shutting the school to everyone except children of key workers and vulnerable children from **Monday 23rd March 2020**, as part of the country’s ongoing response to coronavirus.

Examples of these workers include NHS staff, police and delivery drivers who need to be able to go to work. Vulnerable children include those who have a social worker and those with Education, Health Care Plans. A full list of key worker categories has now been published and includes:

* Health and social care-health and social care supply chain, including producers and distributers of medicines.
* Education and Healthcare
* Public services-
* Food and other necessary goods
* Transport
* Utilities, communication and financial services
* Public safety and national security

Children who do not fall into these groups should **remain at home** with appropriate care. **If it is at all possible for children to be at home, then they should be.** Remember though that they **should not be looked** after by grandparents over 70 as these people are a high risk group.

At the moment, the Academy St James will remain open for children who fall into the above categories. School will open at 8.45am until 3.15pm. We will be running a small breakfast club from 8.00am for our key workers should they need it. We will provide a simple breakfast club but no after school clubs will be available. The school will staff this care provision with volunteers from the staff team who are able to come into school. This may mean that it is different staff each day.

For the children who attend school during this period, they will be expected to access the online learning the same as the rest of their peers. School will be running as a care facility which will provide an education to as many pupils as we have in school. School will endeavor to keep the health and safety of all our pupils’ paramount and will ensure that first aiders and designated safeguarding leads are available during school hours.

**What will happen on Monday if your child is attending?**

If your child will be attending school on Monday, then you need to have tried to inform the school by Monday through class dojo, e-mail or via face to face. It is really important that this has been agreed in advance of closing on Friday so we can work out how many children we have on site. If not let me know.

For children attending school on Monday they will be:

* Welcomed into school through the Year 5 classroom at the bottom entrance. If you child is in Nursery or Reception they will come in through the Nursery entrance.
* If you are entitled to a free school meal we will be providing this and we will be contacting you to find out if you need it. We will also be providing food at school for any child who comes.
* During the day the children will have one physically active session and then take part in a number of other activities designed by staff. Break time and lunchtime would run as normal.
* Children **do not** have to wear school uniform.

We want to be able to support families and pupils during this period of disruption and so this letter aims to outline parental responsibilities around home learning whilst school is closed.

**How can I support my child at home?**

When your child left school yesterday we gave them a home study pack, which was prepared by your child’s class teacher. We have included English, Maths, and topic work in the pack, as well as extra reading books. If your child has already been self-isolating, we delivered these yesterday.

As we are now closing school indefinitely we need to be able to provide ongoing home learning for all our children. Therefore, we will be having an online pack for each child with everything they need to be able to work online from home. All children have log ins to google drive, spelling shed and TT Rockstars where work will be set. If your child is self-isolating, we have sent these details out.

From Monday, all class teachers will be online via Google drive and Google classroom and they will be setting additional online work for your child to complete each day. It is an expectation that your child completes this work daily and teachers will be checking to ensure that it is completed and contact will be made to families if children are not accessing their learning. If your child is ill during this time, then you need to report this to the school office via email.

We understand that many of you will also now be working from home and so we hope that the majority of the work can be done independently (or with a minimum amount of guidance). Teachers will be working from home at times and providing daily online learning

**How to look after yourself?**

It is really important that during this time you try to keep familiar routines for your children. Teachers will suggest online a suggested daily school routine for children to follow during school hours. Well-known routines in everyday life provide security and stability.

As a parent, you may be concerned yourself. Take care of yourself and make sure you have breaks, time to relax, and ask for help from others if needed.

**Will the school be open during Easter?**

School will be providing a child care for pupils over Easter. We will be in touch with you next to discuss this. It is an Easter holiday so teachers will not be setting online work during this period apart from the normal holiday project they would set for the summer term work.

If you have any questions for your child’s class teacher whilst the school is closed then please send contact them via: google drive, class dojo or e-mail account. You can also tweet us for any information you need. The school office email will be checked daily from Monday to Friday during the hours of 8.30am until 5pm therefore a member of staff will do their best to respond to any emails as promptly as possible. It is office@academystjames.com.

I am sure you can appreciate that the school is trying to run as effectively as possible with a very restricted timescale and limited information from the government. We are trying to do the best we can to keep update with DFE guidance and communicate as quickly as possible with parents.

If anything changes regarding the school closures we will, of course, let you know.

Thank you for your continued support and please take care during the next 4 weeks. If you need anything at all, please let us know.

Kind regards

Christopher Tolson