



17<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

Since the national situation is changing so rapidly, I'd like to update you about what we're doing at St Laurence. I want to reassure you that we are reviewing things very regularly, putting contingency plans in place and making changes that are necessary to minimise risk and ensure as much of the normal school routine can continue.

**On Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> March, School will be closed to years 8 and 9 only; we will remain open tomorrow for all other year groups. We have made this decision, with regret, on the grounds of health and safety, due to the growing numbers of staff who are absent. There will be a daily update on the website and we will also text parents and carers.**

If your child is either in year 8 or 9, or self isolating in other year groups, we will ensure that work is made available by Wednesday morning via ClassCharts. Please help us by following this guidance, rather than contacting us about individual students, as we do not have the resources to maintain classes in school as well as provide individualised work for those at home. I understand that this may be challenging but I need to be honest with you about the current situation.

All additional events outside normal school routines will be cancelled or postponed. This includes the Duke of Edinburgh weekend, the Spring Concert, the Chance to Dance Show, the English/Maths /Science briefing for Year 11 parents and the Welcome Evening for Year 6 parents as well as after school clubs, including Homework Club. This is very sad but I'm sure you will understand the reasons at this time.

I appreciate your support in following advice from Public Health England:

Advice from Public Health England is very clear to you as parents/carers and to us in schools if self-isolation is required:

- Anyone with symptoms should stay at home for at least 7 days
- If you live with other people, the whole household should stay at home for at least 14 days, to avoid spreading the infection outside the home
- After 14 days, anyone you live with who does not have symptoms can return to their normal routine
- But, if anyone in your home gets symptoms, they should stay at home for 7 days from the day their symptoms start. Even if it means they're at home for longer than 14 days

I would like to ask you please that, if your child or anyone in the household has a new, continuous cough and / or fever, you do keep them at home and follow the self-isolation advice, more of which can be found here:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-advice/>

You may wish to look at the following advice about wellbeing during self isolation:

[https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/looking-after-your-mental-health-during-coronavirus-outbreak?fbclid=IwAR10Q7Fv9Vd6Xu6Qw8W2-i4XNRbGi6\\_PzdXQJxADXYevo1Lk\\_qOz5qCnNjk](https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/looking-after-your-mental-health-during-coronavirus-outbreak?fbclid=IwAR10Q7Fv9Vd6Xu6Qw8W2-i4XNRbGi6_PzdXQJxADXYevo1Lk_qOz5qCnNjk)



We are following Government guidelines and intend to stay open for as many year groups as possible, staffing permitting or unless we are told to close completely by the DfE. This enables us to maintain as much normality as possible, which is what our young people need, so that their learning and wellbeing is maintained. Currently attendance among students and staff is relatively high. However vulnerable staff have been advised to work from home and it is likely that increasing numbers of other staff will need to self-isolate, either due to their own symptoms or those in their household. We may reach the stage when we are unable to operate fully at a safe level; in that scenario we may need to close school fully. This decision would not be taken lightly, and we would aim to give you as much notice as we practicably can, recognising the inconvenience it would inevitably cause.

Obviously, we are receiving a very high volume of calls in schools about the Coronavirus and I am grateful for your patience with all members of staff who are working incredibly hard in challenging circumstances. Please can I also ask that at this point that parents/carers do not contact us and offer advice or views.

The Department for Education coronavirus helpline is available to answer questions about COVID-19 relating to education and children's social care. Staff, parents and young people can contact this helpline as follows:

Phone: 0800 046 8687

Opening hours: 8am to 6pm (Monday to Friday), 10am to 4pm (Saturday to Sunday)

Thank you for your continued support and, as the situation changes, we will write with further updates.

Kind regards

Yours faithfully

Fergus Stewart  
Headteacher