

17 March 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

As you're probably aware, the government's guidance on the coronavirus has changed from the 'contain' phase to one of delaying the spread of the virus. We're getting in touch to let you know what we're doing in light of this, and what we expect from all of you, to help make sure our school community keeps safe and calm.

We took the difficult decision this morning to close the school to students in Years 8 and 9 owing to staffing levels. Unfortunately, owing to yesterday afternoon's updated advice we have a number of staff who are now required to self-isolate, making it unsafe for us to open to all students with a significantly reduced staff team.

Our reasons for closing to Year 8 and Year 9, and remaining open for Years 7, 10 and 11 at this stage are:

- Year 10 and 11 students are preparing for GCSE exams.
- Year 7 are our largest year group in terms of number, and would be less capable of taking care of themselves at home without adult support.

We will review our plans on a daily basis and will communicate as early and clearly as possible our plans for the rest of the week and beyond.

What's the current situation?

- The **school remains open** – this is the current official guidance we've been given. We will endeavor to open school to as many students as it is safe to.
- We have **postponed several events**, so that we can concentrate on our priority of delivering teaching and learning for our students. We hope to run these at a later date. These events are:
 - Year 11 Parents' Evening on Thursday 19th March
 - Family of Schools Celebration Evening on Monday 23rd March
 - Year 8 Parents' Evening on Thursday 26th March
- The following trips have been cancelled due to travel restrictions:
 - The ski trip (originally scheduled over the Easter holidays).
 - Year 10 trip Xscape on Tuesday 24th March.
- Students should attend unless they feel unwell – if your child or anyone in your household has any of the following symptoms, your child **should remain at home for 14 days**:
 - a new, continuous cough and/or
 - a temperature
- If your child is unwell, report this as you would normally by contacting us via [the Weduc app](#), our phoneline (0114 248 5221) or by email: enquiries@westfield-chorustrust.org

We will keep you up to date with any changes to the current situation.

Outstanding Achievement for All

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What we're doing to protect and support students and staff

- As usual, if any student feels unwell whilst in school, they should go to Reception and the staff in our reception team. If a student has a temperature and/or a continuous cough, they will contact parents to collect the student.
- We are talking to Keir, the facilities management company who maintain and clean our school, on a daily basis, to receive updates about their work.
- We are displaying reminder posters around school about handwashing and good hygiene.
- Staff are reminding students to wash their hands regularly throughout the school day.
- We have used form time to remind students about hygiene and how to deal with anxiety.

What we need you to do

- Pay close attention to communications from school via Weduc and text messages.
- If you've recently changed your contact details, please inform the school office **as soon as possible** via email: enquiries@westfield-chorustrust.org or telephone: 0114 248 5221.
- Talk to your children about the coronavirus. It's a scary time and we should make sure children feel supported. There are some specific resources for younger children at [BBC Newsround](#) and [YoungMinds](#) has practical steps older children can take to help with anxiety. We also have a list of resources to support students in all areas on our [Student Wellbeing webpage](#).
- Come and collect your child straight away, if we ask you to (we'll contact you if they become ill with either a temperature or a new, continuous cough)
- Check that both you and your child have access to [our Weduc app](#), and let us know if there are any issues (so we can make sure we're well prepared for remote learning if the school does need to close at some point).

What happens if the school has to close?

We'll only close, or partially close, if we're either officially advised to do so or we don't have enough staff to run the school. In either case, we will:

- Send a message via [the Weduc app](#) and an email to all parents/carers who we have contact details for. We will also post the announcement on [our website](#), [our Facebook page](#) and [our Twitter page](#).
- We will use the same contact methods to tell you when the school will be reopened.
- Teachers will use Weduc to set work for students. Please ensure you and your child check it at least twice a day.
- Reminders about how to access our IT services and raise any IT issues will be published on our website and sent to students.

Please keep in mind that we're only sending out this information to help the school community prepare. There are currently **no** plans to close.

If you have any questions

Please consult the:

- School office, if you have any questions about our response to this issue via: enquiries@westfield-chorustrust.org
- [NHS](#), if you want to know more about the symptoms of coronavirus. If you think you or your child may have the symptoms, use [NHS 111 online](#) if at all possible before calling 111
- Department for Education's coronavirus helpline: 0800 046 8687, if you have any questions about the government's response to coronavirus in relation to schools

Thank you for your continued support. We will ensure we keep you updated with any developments.

With very best wishes,

Mr Joe Birkbeck

Head of School