

Wednesday 18th March, 2020.



Penketh High School

Dear Parents and Carers,

We have received information that some parents are using social media to voice concerns about the decision taken to ask those pupils classed as “vulnerable” by the government to self-isolate at home. For pupils with underlying health conditions, that leave them vulnerable to infection, we have sent information out via email and some parents have engaged in constructive dialogue with us about the individual circumstances of their child.

Can I thank those parents who have recognised that the school are subject to national guidance and that we are following the information issued to us by central government. Most parents have been appreciative of us taking a pro-active approach to support the pupils most vulnerable to contracting the virus or developing extreme, more serious symptoms.

Whilst the generic party line is “business as usual”, we have to recognise that the situation is NOT a usual one. We are in unprecedented times and at the moment we are trying to balance the educational offer to our young people with looking after their health and wellbeing.

To be clear – the school are not making decisions to penalise pupils, we are making decisions that are in line with the guidance we have been issued around supporting pupils who are vulnerable to the Coronavirus. They are not decisions drawn from our own conclusions.

I understand the frustrations of parents, particularly of those in Year 11 who are a matter of weeks away from their exams. Our message under normal circumstances is to be in school, to prepare well for exams and this remains our fundamental principle; but the health of our young people is paramount and as such we will follow the guidance issued by government and medical professionals.

Ofqual’s current advice is to prepare for the exams as normal, but the situation is not normal and the projected peak of the virus, at the moment, falls in the middle of the examination period. We have to accept that there will be disruption to the exams this year and difficult decisions will need to be made by Ofqual and awarding bodies in response to the inevitable turbulence. I can’t foresee definitively what these decisions will be but it’s important to remember that it is the same for all schools nationally and Ofqual are highly unlikely to allow pupils to be disadvantaged as a result of national guidance regarding the management of Coronavirus.

Finally, whilst we have issued you with information in relation to the guidance that we have, if you want to engage in dialogue with us then please do; but please do so in a constructive manner contacting Mrs Lomax to discuss options going forward.

We are in an extraordinary period and we need to work collectively to support pupils, looking after their health and wellbeing in the first instance and then their educational needs.

Yours sincerely,

Mr J Carlin.

Principal.

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