



20<sup>th</sup> March 2020

## Coronavirus Update 7

Dear Parents / Guardians,

It was Harold Wilson who said famously that 'a week is a long time in politics', I am sure for all of us looking back over the events of this week we can empathise rather well with that sentiment!

### Critical Workers

As you may recall from my previous communication, and in line with the UK government guidance which has finally emerged, we will remain open for vulnerable children and the children of critical workers who cannot be safely cared for at home. We are absolutely committed to supporting these families in every way that we can.

The following principles set out by the guidance are important for all members of the Halliford community to note:

1. **If it is at all possible for children to be at home, then they should be.**
2. If a child needs specialist support, is vulnerable or has a parent who is a **critical worker**, then educational provision will be available for them.
3. Parents should not rely for childcare upon those who are advised to be in the stringent social distancing category such as grandparents, friends, or family members with underlying health conditions.
4. Parents should also do everything they can to ensure children are not mixing socially in a way which can continue to spread the virus. They should observe the same social distancing principles as adults.

The government has today provided further definition of these categories and in summary:

- **Vulnerable children are defined as:** children who are supported by social care, those with safeguarding and welfare needs, including child in need plans, on child protection plans, 'looked after' children, young carers, disabled children and those with education, health and care (EHC) plans.
- **Key workers are defined as:** Health and social care; education and childcare; key public services; local and national government; food and other necessary goods; public safety and national security; transport; utilities, communication and financial services.

You can find more detailed information and definitions via the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision>

Thank you to those who have already been in touch to request we support them with childcare during the forthcoming week. Please be mindful that the School will be running on a skeleton staff next week and no formal face to face teaching will be possible – students will be supervised while undertaking their planned remote learning and with suitable social distancing measures in place whilst also keeping them as comfortable as possible. There will of course be opportunities for exercise and breaks and we are aiming to provide catering and refreshments while staffing levels allow.

I must ask that if any further families require this service you email me in advance and give as much notice as possible, I will then write to provide you with further details. We will determine the provision of this service based upon your occupation and place of work rather than any personal circumstances. Please do not just send your child in to school as I'm afraid we will not be able to support if this is the case as we need to ensure we have the correct level of care and supervision in place, in advance. For those parents wishing to send children in to school on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March who have not informed us as yet please email me directly ([headmaster@hallifordschool.co.uk](mailto:headmaster@hallifordschool.co.uk)) with the details before 6pm tomorrow – Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> March 2020.

### **Public Examinations**

Late this afternoon, the Department for Education produced their guidance on plans to deal with the cancellation of GCSE and A level examinations. I will therefore write separately to those parents involved to bring them up-to-speed with the government response.

### **Social Media**

Thank you again to everyone who has sent such kind words of support in to all of us here at the School, it has made such a difference and we will be sharing some of these messages with our wider community via our social media channels on Facebook and Twitter. If you don't already follow us there, please do take a moment to join up on Twitter we are <https://twitter.com/hallifordhead> and on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/hallifordschool/>

If you have any good news stories to share with the wider Halliford Community and beyond, please do feel free to contact our Marketing Assistant, Olivia Oakley via email: [marketing@hallifordschool.co.uk](mailto:marketing@hallifordschool.co.uk)

I also know that many of you use Classlist and Whatsapp groups which are solely for the use of parents. I do not see any of the conversations on there, but would just ask please that we show the same levels of respect as a community online as we demonstrate to our children. If you have any questions of the school, I am always happy to respond and will do all that I can to support your children so please try not to allow these times of genuine concern to give rise to unhelpful comments and speculation via social media.

### **Food Bank Collection**

Talking of community, I was delighted and truly humbled to see the enormous collection of goods that we have been able to gather together even in these times of bizarre behaviour in our supermarkets! We also managed to raise a magnificent £550 to support the work of the Manna Food Bank and to enable them to help our most vulnerable members of society at this time. Thank you so much for such a splendid community effort.

### **Remote Working**

Alongside this update letter I have sent home three documents for your light reading over the course of the weekend! They are designed to set out for you how we intend to try our best to operate as a school and to

provide to you the very best levels of Remote Working that we possibly can at this time. Clearly this is a fast changing set of circumstances and I hope that you will appreciate the significant effort that my colleagues have put into providing the level of detail for students to work at home.

Whilst we have the capacity to move to some more interactive options including video calling, we are just trialling this with a small group of students at this stage. Advice from other colleagues in Hong Kong and Italy suggests that whilst this seems to be an excellent idea it requires significant thought and planning to be effective and often fails due to issues of a technical nature with families trying to access using a domestic internet service. As we only have a week to run until the end of term at **12.00 noon Friday 27<sup>th</sup> March**, I wanted to be secure in knowing we could provide a service of the highest level so as to minimise any disruption to learning. I will then seek views from you on how effective this service has been and we will then review our provision for the coming term.

It is looking increasingly likely that we will have to potentially provide Remote Working to you for some time and please be assured that as with all our practice at Halliford School we will be constantly developing and adapting our offering to serve the best interests of our students.

### **E-mails**

Please could I ask for your understanding as we know that during the initial period of Remote Working parents and students will have many questions. You will see that we have asked students to use the Post Facility in their Microsoft Team to ask questions of their teacher. However, parents are asked to use email to communicate with teachers as usual and not to interact via Teams. Please can I remind you that staff are asked to monitor emails during normal school hours and during published school term dates. They will respond between 8am and 6pm but please understand that the volume of emails they are likely to be dealing with will be much higher than usual. Equally some colleagues are going to be dealing with periods of potential self-isolation and illness too so if you do not receive a response immediately please do bear this in mind.

### **Collection of belongings**

Several parents have been in touch to ask about collecting belongings for students who are currently remaining at home. We have given this matter a great deal of thought and are proposing the following solution:

- You are invited to collect belongings between 12.00noon – 3.30pm on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March
- Please enter the school site via the front gate on Russell Road and proceed through the arches
- All items belonging to pupils will be labelled and placed on tables ready for collection. To ensure students have all the items they may require School staff will be emptying lockers, which I am afraid may involve forcibly removing padlocks.
- Please then exit the school site via the Wadham Road gate.

Any item not collected will be stowed until the school reopens but will not be available for collection until this time.

We ask that if you or any member of your household are self-isolating due to symptoms of the coronavirus that you do not attend the school. You are of course welcome to send a representative to collect the belongings on your behalf. I would also ask that you respect the fact that from Monday we will be operating a system of social distancing on site when collecting items.

Please note that Reception will be closed to visitors from Monday next week unless a prior appointment has been made.

Finally as we formally close our doors this afternoon and wish you all well, please know that we will keep in touch as much as possible with you all and endeavour to keep you up-to-date with developments within the Halliford Community. It has been a real pleasure this afternoon to spend time with your sons and daughters and my thanks go to all my colleagues who have helped them to enjoy a relaxed afternoon together and to Mr Slocock who led a fantastic day for our Year 11 and Upper Sixth students.

Please stay strong and stay safe and remember that tomorrow is always another day and remember that the sun will rise and that we should be prepared to rise with it to and shine in all that we do for ourselves and one another.

With my very best wishes to you all,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of stylized initials and a long horizontal flourish.