



WILLIAM ELLIS SCHOOL
HIGHGATE ROAD
LONDON
NW5 1RN

HEADTEACHER: MR SAM WHITE

TEL: 020 7267 9346

FAX: 020 7284 1274

info@williamellis.camden.sch.uk

Monday, 16th March 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) INFORMATION

I write further to the information on the school website and in particular about the contingency plans we have in place should we need to close or partially close the school.

Our website (www.williamellis.camden.sch.uk) will remain the main conduit for information about the school's position in response to COVID-19. We will continue to update the website as we receive updated guidance from the Government, Public Health England and Camden.

This afternoon the Prime Minister made announcements that made significant changes to the Government's guidance about self-isolation, non-essential contact and mass gatherings. We expect to receive new guidance tomorrow. The website will be updated tomorrow once we have received this new guidance.

The school is remaining open at present. Please check the daily alert on the website for the latest information.

New guidance about self-isolation

The Prime Minister announced new guidance about self-isolation today. **People should now self-isolate for 14 days if any person in their household shows the possible symptoms of a COVID-19 infection.** The symptoms are:

- a high temperature
- a continuous cough

With the increase in infection this will affect a considerable number of people. **If any person in your household has these symptoms, then your son or daughter should not attend school for 14 days.**

School events and trips

All events and trips planned up until Easter will now not go ahead. This means, for example, that the Year 10 Parent-Teacher meeting **will not** happen this Thursday, 19th March. This decision is a response to the Government's guidance, and it enables us to use staff time to make provision for possible school closure. Decisions about events and trips in the calendar after Easter will be made at a later date.

Preparing for possible school closure

Given the increase in COVID-19 cases and the new guidance about self-isolation we anticipate that we may face considerable staff shortages in the near future. Without sufficient staff we may have to partially or fully close the school. We may also be directed to close the school. Given the rapidly changing situation, decisions about partial or full school closure are likely to be at short notice. I ask that you check the school website daily (any announcement about a school closure will be on a banner at the top of the page), and that you regularly check for emails from the school. **Please also ensure that we have up-to-date contact details for you.**

Partial school closure is when we will close the school to certain year groups. We will prioritise keeping the school open for Year 11, Year 13 and for our younger students.

Setting work for students in the event of full or partial school closure

All of our students have access to Microsoft Office 365. This will be the main vehicle for students to access work should we need to fully or partially close the school. Tutors will be checking that students have their usernames and passwords tomorrow. We will send you details of your son or daughter's username and password by email if they are not in school.

Teachers are endeavouring to put work on 365 now for students currently not in school but, whilst school is open, teachers need to prioritise teaching those students who are in school. We will send guidance for parents to support students to continue their education in the event of school closure.

Absence from school

As stated above students should not come to school if they have, or anyone in their household has, the symptoms of the virus for 14 days.

Parents should seek medical advice if their child has underlying medical conditions or is immunosuppressed. We appreciate that some families have also chosen to self-isolate because members of their household have underlying health conditions or are immunosuppressed.

Please continue to report absence in the usual way.

As of today, the school has had no confirmed cases of coronavirus and until this evening no staff have had symptoms. However, a small number of staff were absent today because members of their household displayed symptoms, they will now self-isolate for the required length of time. Given that testing has now stopped for all but the most vulnerable we do not expect that suspected cases will be confirmed.

Public examinations

I appreciate that there is an amount of concern about this summer's public examinations. At the moment they are expected to go ahead as planned and students should continue to prepare for them. We will let you know if there are any changes.

Further advice and guidance

Please refer to the school website which has links to the most recent advice and guidance. It also includes a link to an online course being offered by the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine about COVID-19 which will be of interest to older students and adults alike.

These are concerning times, but it is important that we all try to remain calm and support our young people through this uncertain period. **We should all try to help them to discern fact from fiction**, especially important when there is a growing availability of dubious information particularly through social media. We should try not to pass on our own concerns or stresses onto our children/students and do our best not to sensationalise this issue.

I would like to thank you for your continued support and understanding through this unprecedented time. We have to take each day as it comes whilst also anticipating how the situation will play out in the longer term. We understand the importance of continuing to provide a good education throughout this period but will prioritise the health and wellbeing of our students and staff.

Yours sincerely,

Sam White

Headteacher