



Ref: KDA/CHU/COVID-19/SchoolClosure

19th March 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

This is the hardest parental and student communication I have ever had to write. It is with a heavy heart that, following the directive issued by the Department for Education, we will have to close Culcheth High School to the vast majority of students due to the COVID-19 Coronavirus, with effect from 3pm on Friday 20th March. The school will remain closed until further notice. Any students self-isolating should not be in school on Friday 20th March; unfortunately that includes any Year 11 students.

It is not a locally determined decision, but is in keeping with the government's guidance in line with their national Coronavirus action plan which can be found by following this link.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-action-plan>

During the school closure, families will need to follow the Public Health England guidance that covers the current COVID-19 Coronavirus quarantine guidance.

Contacting School

During this very difficult time, please do not ring the school or email individual staff members as there is no-one to take phone calls and individual teachers will be remote working and will not have the capacity or resources to follow up, investigate or action any parental requests. Teaching staff have been instructed not to follow up or respond to any individual parental emails during the school closure period.

Please be mindful that our staff are also parents and carers who are also at home with children and other family members in the very same situation that you are.

If you need to contact the school for any reason then please email the school at info@culchethhigh.org.uk. Your email will receive an automated response and all emails will be filtered and responded to according to urgency.

Online Learning for All Students

Work will be set for every lesson via Google Classroom. Students will know their usernames and passwords and how our online platforms work. Students will need to log-in to their school Gmail accounts to access information, which can also be found on the 'Student Learning Portal' on the school website front page. A presentation to explain each platform can be accessed by clicking on the link below.

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1FKElpz-RyYjbfTSUIhwhQQ1MUXcJDLIRqXqEx380b-k/edit?usp=sharing>

Staff will be logging into Google Classroom on a daily basis to set work for each class, as if it is a normal school day timetable. We encourage students to do the same and complete the work set by teachers. This will keep a daily routine for students at home following their school timetable.

Year 11 have already been provided with many resources via Google Classroom and can also access Tassomai, GCSE Pod and Mathswatch to support their studies.

Students will be able to post comments and ask questions about the work via the google classroom 'class comment' facility.

School Visits and Activities

School activities, visits, NEA activities and Drama GCSE performances will be affected and decisions will be made regarding these events and activities when further guidance is provided by the relevant authorities. We are cancelling all visits, however the school and parents may incur loss of deposits. More information will follow in time.

Year 8 Options Forms

We are working on various scenarios with regards to Year 8 Options. We will communicate arrangements for this in the very near future.

Key Workers – Students to Attend School

The government has asked schools to stay open, operationally, to provide child care and support for children of key workers. Culcheth High School will provide what it can for the children of key workers. Once we have clearer guidance, we will send a registration link to parents to register for this support. This will be sent out as soon as we have further guidance. Students who attend school next week will be expected in full uniform and bring all their school resources as per a normal day. Students whose parents are not 'Key Workers' should not attend school or be on the school site.

Free School Meals

We will continue to support and provide free school meals for eligible students throughout the school closure. Once we have further guidance, we will contact parents to inform you of the arrangements. A link will be sent to parents for them to complete a Free School Meal option form once we are fully informed of the plans.

'Keeping in Touch' lists, Student Mental Health & Safeguarding

Even though the school is 'closed', pastoral teams will regularly check in with students and families throughout the closure period. Pastoral teams will have lists of students who have required pastoral support in school who they will continue to 'keep in touch' with throughout the closure period.

Mrs Brearley will be emailing all students with various links to support our students through this difficult period. If, during these unprecedented times, you/your child/children are struggling to cope during this current situation or have any safeguarding concerns and need some support or advice then please use the following resources:

<https://www.kooth.com/>

<http://happyoksad.warrington.gov.uk/>

<http://culchethhigh.org.uk/care-support-guidance/>

The school's Youth for Christ Mentor, Hannah, is also providing support. Students will be emailed the details. All students can email our confidential safeguarding email from their school Gmail account. The email address is soschs@culchethhigh.net. This email account is monitored by Mrs Brearley, our Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Year 11 & GCSE Exams

And now for the most difficult part of my letter. As a Headteacher and parent of a Year 11 student, this is very hard for me to fully digest. Gavin Williamson stated in his address to parliament that;

'We can confirm that we will not go ahead with assessments or exams, and that we will not be publishing performance tables for this academic year. We will work with the sector and Ofqual to ensure children get the qualifications they need. My Department is working closely with local authorities, representatives of

early years, schools and head teachers, regional school commissioners and bodies such as Ofsted and Ofqual about how to deliver this change as effectively as possible. And we will do whatever is necessary to support local authorities, settings, schools and teachers through the weeks and months ahead.'

The key question is, what does that mean for our Year 11 students? The answer is, it is unclear. What we do know is that no GCSE or A-Level exams will take place in May/June. What we do not know is how students will be allocated their GCSE and A-Level qualifications and how students will progress to their post-16 options.

I am not going to speculate about use of school predicted grades, NEA performance, PPE exam results or whether some form of Autumn Assessment Period will take place similar to the recent National Reference Tests. We simply do not know, at present.

As Headteacher and a parent of a Year 11 student, that is frustrating and heart-breaking in equal measure. As soon as I know, I will keep you fully informed. My advice to my son and my advice to all Year 11 students is to keep studying and revising their GCSE subjects as per their school timetable and revision timetable, just in case there is a National Autumn Assessment Period with reduced content and time assessments.

It is very difficult to comprehend that our young people may have been denied the opportunity to sit their exams but I keep reminding myself, staff and students that all their hard work, learning, knowledge and skill development will last forever. Exams are a day and a grade that validates that. Let's not lose sight in the fact that all their learning will still be with them.

In line with the School Calendar, Year 11 Annual School Reports will be issued on Friday 20th March and will be posted home to parents.

Many of you may have seen my twitter interaction with our wonderful students. We will have a 'Year 11 Shirt Signing Day' and Celebration Assembly on Friday 20th March. I have also promised Year 11 students that they will have their 'Leavers' Day & Prom' whether it is this year or next. #WeAreCHS

Updates and parental communications

I have done my best to keep you updated on a daily basis via the various channels. Full updates and developments will continue to be communicated to parents, staff and students via email, the school app and regular updates on the school website.

These are unprecedented measures in very difficult circumstances for all of us. We will do our utmost to provide the best education and support we can in the coming weeks and promise to keep you fully updated of developments as they happen. Let me be clear, we will be working harder than ever from Monday, for however long it takes. Closing is the wrong word to use. Culcheth High School education, guidance and support is not closing, it's changing and evolving over the next few weeks/months to support our students and local community.

May I take this opportunity to thank you for your patience, continued support and wish you, your family and loved ones well as we navigate our way through this very difficult time. #WeAreCHS.

Yours faithfully



C P Hunt (Mr)
Headteacher