

Dear Parents/ Carers

As you know the government updated its advice yesterday evening. Schools have been instructed to stay open, but the health advice has been clarified:

The instruction is now to stay at home for 14 days if you or someone in your household have either:

- a high temperature (above 37.8)
- a new continuous cough

In addition:

- Everyone should stop non-essential contact with others. This is particularly important for people over 70, those with underlying health conditions and pregnant women
- People should work from home where they can
- People should stop all unnecessary travel
- People should avoid places like pubs, clubs and theatres. This applies especially to those in London which is "a few weeks ahead" of the rest of the UK
- By the weekend, those with the most serious health conditions should be largely shielded from social contact for 12 weeks.

Our overriding priority is the health, safety and wellbeing of students, staff and relatives, so **we will respect and support decisions taken by parents and staff, which they feel are in the best interests of themselves and their family.** We are not health professionals, but if you have any concerns, please seek out the relevant advice, and if that requires self-isolation, we will support you and your child. In the current situation, health is more important than attendance.

Whilst the school remains open, we will continue to run a normal timetable as much as possible. Please note the following key points:

- We have instructed all teachers to place their lessons on the VLE. If your child is absent from school, they should access and complete the relevant lessons on the VLE. In the interests of staff workload, please try not to email individual teachers unless there is an important issue.
- Currently, most teachers are in school, but if a teacher is absent, work will still be set for classes.
- If a critical number of teachers are absent, we will have to consider temporary partial or full closure. In the event of partial closure, we would prioritise Year 11 and 13; and Year 7; the children of healthcare professionals; other vulnerable students.
- We will inform parents of any partial or full closure by text and other communication channels as soon as possible, but it could be as late as the morning for that day. If a temporary partial or full closure is required, we would provide daily status updates.

We may also be instructed to close by the government for a longer period of time. In the event of a longer school closure, the following key points apply:

- We will continue to care for and support our students, particularly vulnerable students, as much as we can. We are currently looking into how we can support students in receipt of 'free school meals' during any school closure period, but parents and carers will be responsible for their children's care during the day. The school and the government will outline what this means in terms of social contact with others.
- RM Unify will be the central learning platform and the VLE will be main method of setting work. Use of any additional learning platforms (e.g. Google Classroom) will be directed through the VLE.
- Teachers will, where possible, work from home and set work remotely for all students (Years 7-13) in line with the school timetable.
- This means that students should expect to receive roughly five hours of work a day plus homework (where applicable). For example, if a student has English Monday Period 1 (8.50am-9.50am), it is expected that they would be undertaking work set by their English teacher at home at that time.

- Where possible, the work will follow on from what students are currently doing, but there may be some subjects/ classes where this is not possible. Setting work remotely in the creative and practical subjects may be more difficult.
- Students must complete all work set and submit it as directed by their teachers. Staff will check that students are completing work, and where possible will mark it and provide feedback in line with the school's marking policy. We will notify parents/carers if a student has not been completing work.
- We may contact you by phone or email in order to support you in ensuring that your child is working at home. We accept that parents may wish to contact teachers via email, but we will need to review the workload implications going forward.
- In the event that a member of staff is ill or unable to work fully due to parental responsibilities, we will do our best to ensure that work is still set.
- If possible, we would try to offer some form of skeleton service for the children of key workers, particularly healthcare workers, but this depends on the type of closure. We will send a separate communication out about this.

Please do the following:

- We have informed students that the best way to access the VLE and other resources (Outlook Email, Office 365, Google classroom and One Drive) is via RM Unify. **Check that your child can access RM Unify and the VLE.** Instructions on how to log on and use RMUnify and the VLE have been shared with students and are being sent as a separate attachment with this email.
- If either you do not have computer/ internet access or your child's RM Unify and VLE log-ins does not work, please contact your child's Year Leader immediately, and we will do our best to support you.
- Check that your child is bringing their exercise books, revision guides, textbooks home with them. We have instructed teachers to ensure that students have their exercise books and other key resources with them in between lessons.
- Check that you are receiving all school communications as expected. If not, please contact rwilliams@charternorthdulwich.org.uk or svarcoe@tcset.org.uk.

Special arrangements are being made for Year 11 and Year 13 students to support them with their revision, and these will be communicated separately. Ofqual have informed us that currently all summer exams will take place as planned and students should continue to prepare for exams and other assessments as normal.

Finally, this is clearly a difficult and challenging situation for all of us. We have talked to the students about the need to be kind to ourselves and to others, and to care for, help and support each other. As a school will do our utmost to support and care for your children whether the school is open or closed.

We would also ask you to consider how you can support each other at this time. For example:

- If you are at home, and government instructions allow, could you 'host' your child's friend who may not have a parent at home during the day, or may not have a computer or internet access.
- If you have a spare laptop that you do not need, could you lend it to a child that does not have one or donate it to the school so that we can lend it out (NB you would need to ensure that you have 'cleaned' the laptop beforehand to remove any personal data and it should be in good working order, preferably less than five years old).
- I am also aware of community schemes to support vulnerable individuals. Please let me know if you think the school can support in some way.

Thank you, as always, for your ongoing support. Please do not hesitate to contact the school if you have any questions or concerns, and take care of yourselves and your children.

Yours Faithfully

Christian Hicks
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The Charter School North Dulwich