

19th March 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

RE: Closure of WMG Academy due to COVID-19

Further to our letter dated 18th March 2019, we are writing with further updates regarding the ongoing situation surrounding the national closure of schools. You will be aware that the closure of all schools is one of the latest measures announced by the Government in response to the outbreak of Coronavirus, or COVID-19.

Continued Provision for Vulnerable Students and the Children of Key Workers

As part of the Government's announcement, the Secretary of State for Education has asked that schools continue provision for vulnerable students and the children of key workers. The Academy will identify students and contact parents if we feel they would benefit from this provision, including those with Education, Health and Care Plans and those who are looked after.

We are asking that parents who have been identified as key workers fill out an online form, available by clicking [here](#). This will help the Academy to put the necessary arrangements in place, including staffing arrangements and the provision of catering. **The deadline for completion of this form is 12pm (midday) on Friday 20th March.** At present, we believe that the following professions have been identified as key workers:

- Health Care and NHS workers;
- Emergency Services Personnel, including Fire, Police and Ambulance;
- Delivery drivers;
- Teachers, nursery nurses and school support staff;
- Ministry of Defence, Public Health England and Environmental Health employees.

Please note, students' travel to and from the Academy remains the responsibility of the parent.

Free School Meals

Students in receipt of free school meals should attend the Academy between 10am and 12pm on Monday of every week of closure where they will be issued with vouchers for local eateries.

Exam Season Update

The most striking news to be released last night was that summer examinations for both GCSE and A-Level students will not go ahead this summer.

Once again we are left with an uncertain picture of what the implications of this announcement may be. The Government announced that they would "work with the sector and [exams watchdog] Ofqual to ensure children get the qualifications that they need." We are reluctant at this time to speculate what this may mean and on what basis students will be awarded the grades. It is clear that students will be awarded grades, although at this stage we do not know how those will be determined. As ever we will endeavour to provide as much clarity on this as and when we are able to. For now, we

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recommend students continue with their studies; this provides consistency and routine at a time of uncertainty and ensures that learning habits are maintained.

It is important for us to address the fact that, for our Year 11 and 13 students and parents, this announcement has produced huge anxiety, frustration, anger and confusion and I am sure a multitude of other emotions. Whilst we cannot tell you exactly what will happen, we can tell you this: we are proud of you and we are 100% supportive of you. We understand and share in all of the emotions you feel.

We will support each and every one of you to ensure that you achieve all that you aim to achieve. We will be guided by national policy and, as a clearer picture emerges of what this means, we will keep you informed and make sure that you know the impact that it will have on you as a collective and for your own individual journeys. We will continue our support for your destinations and the next steps in your education career.

We will issue further correspondence to our Year 11 and 13 cohorts separately on this matter when we have more information to give and although the normal end of year celebrations have been postponed, they have not been cancelled and we will celebrate all you have achieved at a later date. Once again, we want to stress and reiterate just how proud of you we are. In the same way that you have coped with all the challenges faced so far, you will cope with this one as well and you can certainly be assured you will do so with 100% support from all in the WMG Academy community.

Ongoing Communication

Of course, we will continue to update parents initially on a daily and then a weekly basis to ensure you are kept informed of the support we are able to offer and the ongoing arrangements here at WMG Academy. In the meantime, please direct enquires to solihull.info@wmgacademy.org.uk. This inbox will be monitored daily and enquires directed to the most appropriate member of staff. Additionally, please read and familiarise yourselves with the information at the end of this letter which will signpost learning resources and sources of support over the coming weeks.

Reducing access to the Academy for students is never a decision that sits comfortably with school leaders and teachers, but as ever the health and wellbeing of our students remain our top priority. Thank you for your support in this matter and we know that you and our students will do all you can to limit the impact of the reduced access to teaching.

Please take good care of yourselves and those in your local community. As ever, we value immensely your support and ask for your continued patience in this unprecedented situation.

Yours faithfully,



Mrs K Tague
Executive Principal



Mr S Tait
Associate Principal

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Additional Information and Support Surrounding the Academy Closure

Learning from Home

Whilst your child is away from the Academy we will work hard to ensure they are well resourced to continue their learning and make progress within their subjects. Students will be set work for each subject on a regular basis via Google Classroom. Students should access this in exactly the same way that they do for homework. The work that has been set will direct students to a variety of tasks using on-line learning platforms such as Google Classroom, Seneca, Kahoot or MathsWatch.

Tasks set will be designed in a way that staff will still be able to monitor work and feedback to students via Google Classroom or Gmail. Feedback and dialogue between staff, students and parents is vital to ensure staff can monitor the workload, as well as physical and mental health of our students.

Senior staff with responsibility for the effectiveness of teaching and learning will be continually reviewing the on-line learning. The methods of learning outlined above may need to be amended if the period of school closure is extended or if significant numbers of staff and/or their families become affected by illness. The learning of Year 11 and Year 13 students should continue to ensure routine and consistency given the uncertainty around external examinations.

• All students

- All students are able to login to their Google Drive, Gmail and Google Classroom from home by using the RM Unify login page. Visit www.rmunify.com and use the students' normal academy login details.
- By accessing their Google Drive, students will be able to continue with any coursework that is completed online e.g. Y10 and Y11 Engineering coursework units.
- By accessing Google Classroom, students will be able to access any specific subject tasks that are set by the teacher.

• Year 10 and 11

- **Year 10 English Literature** - Please refer to Google Classroom, revision workbooks and exam materials are available.
- **Year 11 English Language** - please refer to Google Classroom for past papers and revision resources.
- English queries can be directed to Mrs Shaw, i.shaw@wmgacademy.org.uk .
- **Maths** - Past papers are available on the Mathematics Google Site. MathsWatch tasks will be set on a regular basis. Students have a personal login using the format below:
 - For Joe Bloggs In year 10:
Username: J.Bloggs19@wmgacademy
Password: ilikemaths123
 - For Joe Bloggs In year 11:
Username: J.Bloggs18@wmgacademy
Password: ilikemaths123
- Maths queries can be directed to Mr Naeem, u.naeem@wmgacademy.org.uk .
- **Science** - Google classroom will be used to upload remaining lesson material. Past papers will also be uploaded. Students can also access their digital text book when logging into Kerboodle.
- Science queries can be directed to Miss Islam, a.islam@wmgacademy.org.uk .

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- **Option Subjects** - Specific tasks will be added on to Google Classroom to support any missed content and exam preparation.
- **Year 12 and 13**
 - Sixth Form students are encouraged to make direct contact via email with their subject teachers. This will be the best way to access guidance and subject materials.
 - Each student can still use Google Classroom to access relevant materials.
 - Engineering students should continue to work on their assignments online, using the shared support materials.

Inhalers

We are aware that there is some concern about children having sufficient inhalers, so if we hold a spare inhaler at the Academy you may wish to come and collect this to have at home. Please ensure it is returned to us when the Academy reopens.

Technical Support and Communication

We will continue to update parents via email as the situation evolves and would advise them to monitor our social media sites. If parents have any concerns or require technical support, please email info@wmgacademy.org.uk. This inbox will be monitored daily and enquiries will be directed as appropriate. Please note that phone lines will not be actively managed.

Once again, we ask for your patience and consideration during this continually changing and challenging time. Whilst we are 100% committed to providing an excellent level of ongoing education and communication, we are in an unprecedented situation. Our staff will be working hard to fulfil their working responsibilities, but they will be working in difficult circumstances as they also manage their own childcare responsibilities, their own health and wellbeing and the needs of their wider family members.

Staying Healthy

We are all inundated with advice about handwashing and being careful to not touch eyes, noses and mouths etc. Advice on this is available at <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/best-way-to-wash-your-hands/>. We also feel that mental health is very important given the fact that we are likely to face more time than we would ordinarily in isolation. Advice on this is available at <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/>.

Student Support

Increased time together as families and a lack of our normal routine is in itself unsettling and disruptive. We are trying to support some semblance of normality through the setting of work. We do identify that for some students an extended period of time without school is of a concern, given the stability and consistency that school provides. Support for students is available at RM Unify, accessed through the Academy's website.

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