

10 March 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

### Update – 10/3/2020

Whilst I will continue to use the website link to update you both on the advice from Public Health England and on the cases of self-isolation from within our community, the College Leadership Team has now moved to a new phase of planning and communication. We are making active preparations for the possibility of a mandated shut down of school. We will still continue to adhere to the advice of Public Health England and will only close when advised by them to do so. However, whilst the government advice still clearly states that we should continue to be open, it is also clear that matters are escalating, and the possibility of school closure is becoming increasingly likely.

Yesterday afternoon I chaired an extra-ordinary meeting of the College Leadership Team, where we advanced our planning for this eventuality. We will be using this week to finalise documentation. Staff training will also begin this week, and continue into next, along with training for all pupils.

In advance of finalised documentation being shared with you, I would like to reassure you that our expectation is for the continued delivery of the curriculum, not just via the provision of resources and tasks, but also via ongoing virtual interaction between staff and pupils. In short, we intend to maintain the familiar routines and expectations of the normal school timetable for pupils and staff in all ways that remain possible. We will be advising that all pupils continue to follow their daily timetable as if they were at school.

We will achieve this principally via two platforms; Firefly and Microsoft Teams.

**Firefly** - Senior School pupils are already familiar with Firefly. The Junior School are not familiar and as such a separate letter with guidance of how to activate and access Firefly will be sent to all parents on Wednesday 11 March (please note that we are sharing log-in details for Firefly with parents in the Junior School only). Firefly will be used as the primary tool for sharing resources, setting and receiving work. In the Senior School, Firefly will also be used for giving feedback to pupils, whereas in the Junior School, feedback will be communicated via pupil email accounts, with parental supervision and support.

**Microsoft Teams** – Most pupils and parents will not yet be familiar with Microsoft Teams. This will be used to deliver as much interactive learning support as possible, including access to both recorded and regular live-feeds from teachers, as well as facilitating debate and discussion and virtual conferencing for older pupils in smaller sets. Microsoft Teams will provide pupils with the continuity of their timetable and the ability to access both recorded and live-feeds from teachers setting tasks and work, as well as having questions answered. In the Senior School, all pupils will be expected to follow their daily timetable, as they would as

if they were at school. For the older pupils in the Senior School, in smaller sets, Microsoft Teams will allow for virtual conferencing and for whole lessons to be continued by being streamed online. In the Junior School, pupils and parents will have access to a combination of live question and answer sessions, pre-recorded video links and resources for lessons that will provide continuity of the curriculum.

As well as using these primary platforms, pupil email use will be maintained for communication between staff and pupils in the Senior School and staff will be able to access their emails from home and to correspond with you in this way. Telephone communication is also possible through Microsoft Teams for our staff to contact you. In the Junior School, please use your child's email address to contact the form teacher, should you wish to. This will need to be set up in order for you to access Firefly and this information will be included in the letter to be sent out to all Junior School parents tomorrow.

There are a number of logistical and practical checks that are necessary before we are ready to instigate this plan, and there will now need to be some disruption to regular teaching towards the end of this week and across next, whilst we train pupils and staff accordingly. We need to begin staff training as soon as possible and the first available time for this is this Friday afternoon, 13 March. We appreciate that this is very short notice for parents but we will be cancelling afternoon lessons and after-school clubs this Friday. For those of you who cannot collect your children early, or allow them to make their own way home, we will ensure that there is a safe space in the College for them to be supervised. Please respond to the Survey Monkey at <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/8ZQH7RQ> (Senior School) to let us know your intentions and in the Junior School, please email your child's form tutor directly to advise them of whether you will be collecting your child at the time listed below, at normal collection time, or if you intend for them to attend After School Care. All pupils will be fed and it is expected that they all eat before they leave, with the following departure times being maintained, where possible:

Pre-Prep – 1300 (from the East Gate, as per normal collection arrangements)

Prep – 1315 (from the East Gate, as per normal collection arrangements)

Senior School – 1350

For those parents in the Junior School who are unable to collect their children and wish to use after-school care, this facility will still be run.

In the Senior School, we will be training pupils throughout the course of next week in how to make full use of our virtual learning programme, as well as our expectations of them. We will be sharing with parents all the resources that we have provided to your children. In the Junior School we appreciate that parental involvement in these arrangements will be necessary and it is with this in mind that the Junior School form teachers will be hosting a presentation where they will outline how you can facilitate your child accessing the curriculum from home, as tailored to their age range. These sessions will take place from 1600–1700 in your child's form room on Wednesday 18 March.

In terms of planning at home, I would recommend that families ensure that any problems with internet access and computer availability for your children are resolved swiftly. It would also be helpful for you to ensure that all pupils have downloaded the apps *Firefly for Students*,

*Microsoft Teams* and *Microsoft Outlook* or bookmarked these on their web browser. The URLs are as follows:

Firefly: <https://stdunstans.fireflycloud.net/>

Email: <https://outlook.office365.com>

Teams: <https://teams.microsoft.com/>

To download Teams: <https://teams.microsoft.com/downloads> (do not search in Google)

To get started with Teams: <https://support.office.com/en-us/article/sign-in-and-get-started-with-teams-6723dc43-dbc0-46e6-af49-8a2d1c5cb937>

For those of you with children in public examination classes, we quite understand what a worrying time this will be for you. Ofqual advised schools yesterday to continue to prepare for summer exams and assessments as normal. They state 'It is still many weeks until exams start and we will issue updated advice if necessary, giving schools and colleges as much notice as possible'. We must continue with this in mind and be reassured by all we are doing as a school to offer support to those in public examination year groups.

We are pleased to confirm that all coronavirus tests required to be taken by St Dunstan's parents or pupils have been returned as negative, bar one Senior School pupil who is currently awaiting a result. No staff members have required testing so far as none have been to an affected area or had exposure to a confirmed case.

We have decided that, as an additional precaution, we will not permit hand shaking until such time as the Covid-19 outbreak is brought under control. Thank you for your understanding at upcoming school events.

Please be aware that Public Health England have deemed the entirety of Italy to be a Category 1 area for anyone returning from 9 March 2020 onwards (self-isolation required even if no symptoms); further details can be found [here](#). Please advise the College if this now requires action on your part. We are also mindful of the message from the Chief Medical Officer suggesting that self-isolation for any respiratory infection may come into place within the next 10–14 days and we will update our guidance to pupils, staff and parents should that outcome transpire.

Finally, thank you very much to everyone for your considerable support and understanding during this more challenging time.

Yours sincerely



Mr N P Hewlett  
Headmaster