

## To Parents, Agents and Guardians of Students at Sidcot School

14 March 2020

Dear Parent / Agent / Guardian

### Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Update

In the light of the ongoing world-wide response to the COVID-19 pandemic, I am writing to provide you with the latest information on the way in which we are addressing issues at Sidcot School and to answer some of the questions that you have been raising with us recently.

However, may be firstly reassure you that at Sidcot we are fully prepared to deal with any students who may show symptoms of COVID-19 and we have a plan in place for isolation and we will be following Public Health England (PHE) advice for their care. We will be working with our Health Centre Staff, who are on site and readily available to assist.

- **European Families** – we can approve weekend leave for students who wish to travel to their homes in Europe and return to School, however they must follow PHE/FCO guidance and continually monitor the situation during their absence with regard to their return to the UK.
- **Outside Europe** – we are quite happy for any students living outside of Europe to travel home at the end of term. However at this time it is impossible to know what the prevailing conditions will be within other countries at the time of their return to the UK. The ability for students to return from their home country, will therefore be dependent on such conditions which may vary from country to country.
- **Overseas Trips** – we have cancelled the ski trip due to take place at the end of this term and will be in a position to refund all monies paid by parents through insurance. We will contact the relevant parents directly over the course of next week. All other planned trips will be under review.
- **Tier 4 Visas** – the UKVI have confirmed that extended absence from school will be permitted with the normal rules being relaxed due to these circumstances.
- **Leaving School before the end of Spring Term** – for those families who would prefer to withdraw their children prior to the end of Term, I am happy to grant permission for this additional leave of absence. We would understand if parents in some parts of the world feel that in a rapidly escalating situation they are wishing to take their child out of school.
- **Easter Holidays** – the school Easter break will not be cancelled and all students will be expected to leave the school site (unless on the Easter Revision study programme) on Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> April.

Please also be advised that transport to airports from the School will be maintained as per usual arrangements.

- **Easter Revision Course** – please be advised that this course has been planned to take place since September 2019 and is a separate programme to the normal school teaching and learning activity. It is run in partnership with ‘Academic Summer’ and places need to be booked for participation. Please following this link (click [here](#)) if this option would be of interest to your family.
- **School Closure** – at this stage it is not anticipated that Sidcot School will be closing in the near future. However, if the UK Government insists that all schools should be closed, we will not expect boarding students to leave the site immediately. Students will be looked after at the School until a time when they are able to travel home.
- **Remote teaching** – we will be offering resources which will enable remote teaching on line in the event of a school closure, so that students can continue with their studies. Students will be briefed on accessing these resources through the school systems - FIREFLY, OneNote and MS TEAMS. This should limit any impact of a school closure and ensure that the teaching and learning of the students is maintained. We hope to be able to run a remote delivery to all students, but will be prioritising those currently preparing for external examinations (Years 11 and 13).
- **Communication** – in the event of a school closure, we will be communicating with students via their **school email address**. We are unable to communicate via other personal email addresses or messaging apps, for reasons of safeguarding and data protection. Students should make sure that they know their log-in details before they leave school to return home.
- **Public Examinations** – for any students who are studying the IB Diploma, we have been notified that they may take their examinations at an IB school in their own country, providing that the school is willing to accept them. If you feel that you need to take advantage of this it will be the responsibility of either parents or agents to make such arrangements. At this point, Examination Boards in the UK for GCSE and A Level have yet to advise about any alternative provision. The default position is for students to carry on studying in order to prepare for these summer exams.
- **Face Masks** – we respect the cultural differences with regard to wearing face masks. We feel that if you son or daughter feels safer by wearing a mask, then this will be permitted on school site.

Whilst the situation is still developing, we remain hopeful that the virus will remain effectively contained in the months that remain before the start of the next academic year. We are currently in the process of updating our policy in the event of students being unable to return to School owing to quarantine or travel restrictions and will provide updates as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely



Iain Kilpatrick  
Headmaster

**Useful websites:**

- Please find a link to current PHE guidance below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-people-with-confirmed-or-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

- Please use this link to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website:

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>

- Please use this link to NHS England:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/>