

## To Parents of Students at Sidcot School

17 March 2020

Dear Parent

### Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update

Following the continuing measures being enforced by the UK Government, I am writing with an update of the School's position, particularly in regard to contingencies should we receive an instruction to close.

- **Online Supported Learning (OSL)** – Should it be required to close the school, we will revert to a system of supporting the learning of students remotely. This will be through our established online platforms of FireFly, MS TEAMS and MS OneNote, as well as by email.

Teaching staff have been working on ways in which they can continue to deliver as many aspects of the curriculum as possible to students over a sustained period of school closure. Many of these strategies will already be familiar to students and parents.

OSL will not necessarily operate in real time, but will deliver subject content, allow teachers to set tasks for students to complete that will be marked and feedback provided. There may be times when teachers would like to deliver an online lesson through MS TEAMS. If this is the case, it will follow the normal time on a student's timetable and be advised in advance.

**Duration of OSL** - It will operate from the point the school closes for as long as this remains the case. Normal term dates and holidays – including the forthcoming Easter holiday – will still apply and teachers will not be delivering OSL at these times.

For those students who have already left, we will provide support where possible. However, there will not be a full OSL offer whilst school is still operating normally.

**OSL Priorities** – Although we intend to offer online supported learning to all students, teaching staff will be prioritising those taking public examinations in the summer term.

**Junior School** – Pupils in the Junior School will also be taught through OSL. Separate information from Natalie Bone, Head of Junior School, will be sent to parents.

- **Communication** – In the event of a school closure, we will be communicating with students using 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

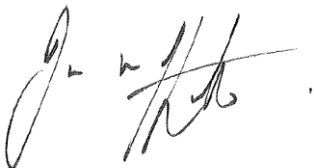
should **make sure that they know their log-in details** before they leave school to return home.

- **Updates** – We have created a page on FireFly that can be accessed by students and parents, on which updates will be posted. In addition, we have created a section on the homepage of the school website, where additional information can be found.
- **Advice to Parents** – My colleagues Charlotte Resuggan and Veronika Chidemo are in the process of putting together a help sheet for parents to support their children, both educationally and in terms of their well-being, in the event of a prolonged period of school closure. We hope this will be ready for circulation before the end of this week.
- **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 the necessary 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 exams in the summer.
- **Boarding Students** – The measures being taken by individual countries to close borders and isolate areas have made travel arrangements for boarding students very complicated. We are continuing to monitor these developments and support students and families with their plans.

In these unprecedented times, I have been hugely encouraged by the response of the whole Sidcot community. It continues to be a developing picture, but students, staff and parents have approached the current challenges with calm pragmatism and a deep care for one another. It has been a privilege seeing the School's values being lived out in such a palpable way.

Should parents have any further concerns at this stage, please do not hesitate to make contact through the usual channels.

Yours sincerely



Iain Kilpatrick  
Headmaster