



PitsfordSchool

Re: Covid-19 coronavirus and Pitsford School

23 March 2020

Dear Parents

Even though school has closed, I am afraid I am still writing to you as we are still teaching until we can open the gates again (as soon as possible).

From this morning, we have uploaded lessons onto Firefly for the day (my poor Year 7s have received theirs) and this will continue and I am sure some unexpected complications will appear, that we will resolve. If anything strikes you then please let me know – feel free to email me directly (cwalker@pitsfordschool.com).

As I wrote last week, we will remain open to support the children of key workers for as long as we can, and I will be in touch later this week with details about what the Easter holidays will look like for school.

At the same time, I have been asked by the ASCL (one of the many acronyms to which I belong) on behalf of the Minister of Education to stress to all of our community, that key workers' children coming to school must be the last resort. This is due to the greatest amount of social distancing possible being integral to the Government's strategy in combatting the spread of Covid-19 and there is a concern that we could be a locus of infection or my teachers could get infected, affecting our ability to remain open.

The link to the statement is here -

<https://twitter.com/GavinWilliamson/status/1241421903354564609>

And speaking of that social distancing, I would like to echo other information that you will be receiving about the necessity of structure in your children's' lives as the next weeks and months will be a struggle for them (and you, and me) to narrow our world, to stay safe. As with every big challenge, the most important thing to do is take everything one step at a time, so I hope you do not mind my suggestions which I have listed over the page.

If you have any further wisdom to impart, then please let me know and I will happily pass it on through to our friends and neighbours, in the Pitsford family.

I hope that this letter finds you and your family well and bearing up.

Best wishes and stay safe,

Dr C G Walker
Headmaster



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Remote Learning; structures and advice

All of our students have accounts for the Firefly online network. Every morning the lessons for that day will be posted on Firefly with any materials that are required linked to the post or contained within it.

Work set will be able to be either posted to Firefly or emailed to staff directly (I have included to this letter the list of my colleagues' work emails).

Students should try to spend their days as if they were in school, not least as I am confident that in a few weeks' time it will be common for us to be able to teach via conference calls (my colleagues are working on this as I type).

Thus my advice is that school days should start at **9am**. A meaningful break at **11am** would be sensible, and then work through to lunch. Every school leader I have spoken to advises a fixed lunchtime as well (say **1pm**, like at school).

Being cooped up is bad for physical and mental health, so I advise using some of the afternoon to unwind by getting into the garden or decompressing in some other way, before finishing off the day's work before dinner, so aim to end the school day around **4.30-5pm**?

I would advise policing your child's access to their phone or games (as we try in school) as both things are a thief of time and the greatest distraction ever invented. In particular, we are aware that social media, which is normally a bit of a pest could be a bad thing at times like this and the more that you can control your child's access to it the better, I suspect.

Various schools recommend software to help with this – here are two links which have been sent to me: <https://ourpact.com/> ; <https://uk.pcmag.com/parental-control-monitoring/67305/the-best-parental-control-software-for-2020>

Even though we are not physically together, I want to stress that your students' teachers are still there for them. This is why I have sent you the email addresses and as with the school when it is open, Form Tutors are the key go-to-guy (or gal) for any issues faced by your child or you.

Mrs Kirk has also set up forums for forms to meet virtually via Firefly which are outlined elsewhere – it would be sensible for your students to pop into those forums at break and lunch as they would in school.

We will be uploading onto Firefly in the next day or so some advice about fitness and sport which can also focus energies and keep everyone moving in the right direction and as healthy as they can be.

Some schools are uploading inspiring assemblies and messages and if your children do not behave you can tell them that I will start that too.

Headmaster: Dr.C Walker

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Staff Email Addresses

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