



Peafield Lane Academy

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Dear Parents/Carers

Coronavirus Information

Earlier in the week I wrote to you to let you know that for UK schools it is 'business as usual,' and this continues to be the case. I can appreciate that whilst we are saying one thing, the media are continuously speculating and this can be confusing. Therefore, I thought I would write to clear up some concerns and offer some advice by answering a few of the questions that we have been receiving.

1 Is the school closing?

No.

At least not yet. It may be that at some point in the future the government decides to close schools but we don't know when this might happen or whether there will be a country-wide closure or a more local response. Schools receive daily updates and this is because decisions are being made on a day-by-day basis at government level. What is highly unlikely is that we will be told e.g. "schools will close in two weeks' time." More likely, we will receive instructions on one day to say closures will be from the next working day.

2 How will we know if the school will close?

If there is a national closure it is possible that the first you (and we) will hear about it is that there will be an announcement by the government on TV, radio, etc. Following this, we will immediately contact each of our parents via text to let them know what is happening. Information will be posted on the school website. The school will not close part way through a day. So, if there is an announcement at e.g. 11am by the Prime Minister, you will be told that Peafield Lane will be closed 'from tomorrow' or 'from Monday' and we will share with you the anticipated length of closure.

If schools close...

3 What will happen to my child's education?

Whilst we are being told that it is 'business as usual' we have looked at what is happening in other countries and, behind the scenes, we are preparing for 'just in case'. Teachers this week are preparing work packs that can be sent home and we are also planning for teachers to be available online for periods of the day to be accessible to parents and children to provide learning support. We are still working on the fine details but the plan is that there will be set times during the day where children and/or parents can contact their teacher directly from home. It won't be for the whole day as, just like you, many staff will have their own children off school and they will need to meet their own families' needs.

Over the next few days we will be trying to find which of our families can and cannot access online learning platforms (access to smart phones, tablets, computers, etc). We are also looking at multiple platforms to ensure communication and information sharing remains safe. At the moment it is looking like Class Dojo might be one solution but we have more testing and staff training to do – please get signed up if you haven't already! It will take a few days to get systems in place and then train staff and children to use them.

4 What will happen with SATs and other exams?

All of the information we have received so far is that they will go ahead as normal. We need to remember that any decisions will be made on a national level and no individual child will be worse or better off should the unlikely decision be made to postpone exams, or indeed, sit exams having missed several weeks due to school closures.

5 Will the school be open for childcare?

No.

6 What will staff be doing?

Teachers will be expected to provide work for pupils and be accessible for online communication for a period of time each day during term time. TA staff will have training programmes that they will be accessing. Admin staff will be working from home. Cleaning staff will be in school carrying out a deep cleaning exercise.

7 Can I keep my child off school as a precaution?

No. It has been made clear to all schools that the normal attendance arrangements are in place. Any unauthorised absences will be logged and could lead to significant fines. If the schools are open, they remain open for all pupils and attendance is compulsory barring the usual acceptable reasons for absence.

8 Where can I get more information?

The Department for Education coronavirus helpline is available to answer questions about COVID-19 relating to education and children's social care. Staff, parents and young people can contact this helpline as follows:

Phone: 0800 046 8687

Opening hours: 8am to 6pm (Monday to Friday)

Please try to avoid phoning the school. Schools across the country, including Peafield Lane were inundated with phone calls from concerned parents yesterday when the government were meeting to discuss their response plans. As soon as we know anything we will let you know.

Finally, I want to reiterate once again that until we tell you any different it really is 'business as usual.' Unless we tell you otherwise, we will continue to operate as planned right through to Easter with no changes to timetables, planned events or term dates.

As always, I am available to anybody for a quick chat without prior appointment and I'll try to be around outside each morning and at the end of the day for any questions.

Kind regards



Gary Walker
Headteacher