



Haberdashers' Monmouth Schools

From the Principal **Mr James Murphy-O'Connor** MA Oxon

10th March 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians

We are closely monitoring the latest medical and government advice to ensure that everyone within our school community is protected and supported to the best of our ability as we face up to the challenges posed by the Novel Coronavirus.

Whilst we hope the impact will be minimal in Monmouthshire, I wanted to reassure you that we are determined to run our family of schools as normally as we can for as long as we can. However, in such a rapidly changing situation, we need to make contingency plans in case we face a situation when some of the staff and students may be quarantined or unable to get to school, or like Italy and now Madrid, when schools are forced to close.

Our approach will have to adapt to and respond to the unfolding course of events. We are a boarding school so cannot close completely and there will, therefore, be additional support from the local authority if needed to help keep our boarding community up and running. However, the school could be shut to day pupils and necessitate remote learning. As symptoms for the majority of the population are mild, we plan to set work for students, particularly in older year groups, so they will not fall behind in their studies. In this scenario, we plan to:

- Email work to students for their subjects daily so we can ensure the necessary work is covered during the normal school week
- Respond to email queries on a daily basis to support students in their learning
- Communicate with students via other means including Firefly, Skype etc
- Enable access to files via Citrix

Should the schools be affected by reduced staffing, we are putting plans in place to deliver teaching across the classes to ensure all pupils gain teaching input. A greater priority will be given to exam classes in Years 11 and 13. We are expecting to get detailed advice from exam boards on their contingency plans shortly, as there has been a series of meetings to discuss fall-back arrangements if the Coronavirus is at its height in May.

We have also received many queries from parents over school trips and personal travel plans over the Easter holidays. Our line remains that we are following government advice to the letter and have not imposed additional restrictions on our pupils, parents or staff. The Year 8 trip to Naples was cancelled yesterday as the whole of Italy was reclassified as essential travel only. We are currently reviewing training camps for rowing and football in Spain as restrictions are now being put in place. At the moment, the lacrosse tour to the US and Classics tour to Greece remain unaffected but this may change. The cost of any cancellations will be covered by the schools' insurance policy, which is activated when following government advice.

If any parents or pupils travel to, or transit through, restricted areas over the Easter holidays, they will be required to self-isolate for 14 days before returning to school. The list of countries that pose an increased risk can be found here [COVID-19: Specified countries and areas with implications for returning travellers or visitors arriving in the UK](#)

Over the coming weeks, we will continue to communicate any updates via email and all letters will be posted on our website www.habsmonmouth.org/coronavirus . Thank you for your patience and understanding as we adapt to this fast-moving situation.

H Murphy - O'Connor