



## Haberdashers' Monmouth Schools

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

12th March 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians

Further to my letter on Tuesday, things are moving quite rapidly with the continued rise of Covid-19 cases across the UK. Today's Cobra meeting has outlined further restrictions which will be imposed nationwide to help slow down the spread of the virus as we move from the containment to delay phase.

As of 5pm today, we will now ask that all pupils and staff must self-isolate for seven days if they develop a persistent cough or a temperature above 37.8 centigrade.

The Executive Committee met this morning to review all activities across our family of schools to identify higher risk events. Our overriding concern is the health and wellbeing of our whole school community and we recognise our duty of care to minimise the risk posed to more vulnerable members of our extended community.

While we have tried to balance providing a full educational programme with minimising this risk, we will put in place the following changes to our school calendar with immediate effect:

- No whole school assemblies due to numbers attending and close proximity of pupils and staff.
- Parents' evenings for our Pre-Preps will be rescheduled.
- All concerts will be postponed, and alternative dates sought wherever possible. This will include Friday's tea concert at the girls' prep, next Tuesday's concert at Wyastone, and the Friday Afternoon Choir concert on 20<sup>th</sup> March with local primary schools at The Blake.
- We are cancelling all external theatre and cinema trips with immediate effect. The school will reimburse the cost of the Year 10 trip to see Blood Brothers in Coventry and boarders' cinema trip on Saturday.
- The Careers Convention scheduled for the 19<sup>th</sup> March will be postponed. A significant number of the exhibitors had pulled out adhering to their own business protocols to avoid all but essential face-to-face meetings.
- Each residential trip in the UK is being assessed on a case-by-case basis. The Year 5 trip to Naturesbase in Lampeter and the Year 12 geography field trip to Swanage are both deemed low risk and are currently going ahead unless government advice on residential trips changes over the weekend. We will take the additional precaution of taking each person's temperature before they leave for the trip. Any day pupil who has a raised temperature will need to be collected by parents and boarders will stay in the medical centre.

- All overseas school trips will be cancelled in light of this afternoon's announcement. We are hoping this change to government advice will validate our insurance. Therefore, the following trips over the Easter holidays will no longer take place: the German/history trip to Berlin, the Year 8 trip to Naples, the football trip to Madrid, rowing training camp to Seville, Classics trip to Greece, and the lacrosse tour to the USA. We are unclear on whether or not this travel ban will impact on summer trips but will confirm as soon as we are able to.
- Fixtures are set to continue this weekend. There is a strict protocol in place with home and away teams required to confirm that they have not travelled to restricted areas within the last 14 days. In addition, there will be no handshaking and teams will be encouraged to wash hands more frequently.
- We are liaising with the organisers of the National Schools' Heads and netball, hockey, football, rugby 7s tournaments scheduled over the next three weeks. We are fully expecting a number of these events to be cancelled given the large numbers of schools participating.

I am sure you will appreciate, this is such a rapidly changing situation, the list of events and activities outlined above may well become more extensive. If like Ireland, the government takes the decision that at some future date schools and colleges in the UK must close, we will then put in place our plan for remote learning. The Heads will email you with the arrangements for sending work online should this prove necessary.

As the list of European countries classified as a restricted area grows, we would like to remind families planning to travel abroad over the Easter holidays that they may well face restrictions on their return to the UK. We will be imposing a 14 day self-isolation policy before day or boarding students can be readmitted to school if returning from a Category 1 country or showing symptoms from a Category 2 country. 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](#)

All letters about Covid-19 will be posted on our website [www.habsmonmouth.org/coronavirus](http://www.habsmonmouth.org/coronavirus).

Thank you again for your patience and understanding as together we face the challenges of adapting to this fast-moving situation.

*H Murphy - O'Connor*