

COVID-19

UPDATE: Friday 20th March 2020



Dear Parents, Guardians and pupils,

As we near the end of this unprecedented week, I want to provide you with an update on the current situation regarding educational and pastoral arrangements moving forward.

I want to publicly acknowledge the work carried out by the entire Sperrin College staff. We have been working under extremely challenging and changing circumstances over the last number of days to ensure you and our young people have information and resources for some continuity of learning, albeit remotely. Given that it is envisaged the school will be closed until further notice, the teachers will continue to post new work and resources on the distance learning platforms. I will provide a separate document posted on the school website entitled, '**A GUIDE FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS: WORK SCHEDULES**', which will set out expectations of work for each Key Stage. Within each schedule, pupils are given guided learning hours for each day, as well as recommendations for other tasks, such as physical exercise.

EXAMINATIONS

Late on Thursday evening, all schools received a letter from the Minister of Education regarding examinations. The Minister statement is outlined below:

'In line with my Ministerial colleagues in England and Wales, following advice from my officials and the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessments (CCEA) and with full consideration of what is in the best interests of our young people, we will not proceed with GCSEs, AS and A levels this summer.'

'CCEA will therefore continue to work with other awarding organisations to develop a robust process for awarding grades. The plan is to use a combination of prior achievements, internal teacher-assessed tracking information, predicted grades and analysis and modelling of existing data trends to provide the necessary assurance about the robustness, accuracy and fairness of the grades being awarded.'

Please understand that schools do not have any further information than this at present. Details will emerge over time and we will endeavour to pass these on and translate them in meaningful ways to our students. Therefore, with regards to online submissions of work set remotely for exam classes, we will, in time, advise what work we **need** in order to inform the process.

We fully understand how stressful this situation is for students and their families. We offer our heartfelt sympathies to them, and trust that in time, appropriate solutions will be found.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

There is no doubt that COVID-19 is a serious health threat to the entire population, therefore it is paramount that everyone continues to follow the advice from government and adhere to the social distancing guidance and procedures regarding hand hygiene.

In addition to distance learning, it is important that all our pupils, keep physically and emotionally well. We recommend that our pupils take this opportunity to help and support their parents in whatever way possible by doing housework, helping younger siblings with their studies, gardening or learning a new skill.

SAFEGUARDING

Parents and pupils are advised if you need help or pastoral support there will be a list of helplines and web pages also available on the school website entitled, '**PASTORAL SUPPORT**'.

TECHNICAL SUPPORT

There are a range of issues pupils might face when making use of C2K, MySchool, Google Classroom and other online learning platforms.

These include, but are not limited to:

- Forgotten passwords
- Accessing a particular Google Classroom

- Accessing an assignment in a Google Classroom
- Logging into MyMaths or Accelerated Reader

In order to address this, we will post on the school website a document entitled, **'TECHNICAL SUPPORT FOR DISTANCE LEARNING'**. Parents are advised to follow the guidance outlined.

YEAR 14: EMAILS FROM UNIVERSITIES

Year 14 pupils are advised to check their emails regularly as there may be communications from the universities.

SUPPORT FOR KEY WORKERS

You will be aware from media reports, that from Monday 23rd March 2020, schools will be open to children of key workers. We want to help in this extremely challenging time. The Department of Education has asked that schools make themselves available to support **KEY WORKERS**. Therefore, the school will **ONLY** be open to children of key workers, in Year 8-10 who have **ESSENTIAL** need of childcare. Households in which both parents are key workers, or the sole parent is a key worker.

We have a duty of care **TO PROTECT THE HEALTH** of children of key workers. We want to do this in a way that will fulfil our obligations for safe social distancing.

If, as a parent and a key worker, you find yourself in a position of need, with no other options, please phone the school office before 4pm on Friday 20th March so that we can plan and prepare for Monday 23rd March. We are understanding if further calls need to be made after this time. We will do our best to help you.

Once again, I want to thank you all for your continued support in these difficult times.

B Heron

Principal