



20 March 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update

Firstly, apologies for the volume of information which has been sent out today. I hope you understand that the timeframe that we have been operating on has been a challenge; understandably, we do not receive any information prior to it becoming publicly available through the press conferences and announcements in the House of Commons.

Communications 20 March 2020

In summary, parents should have received the following information from the school today:

- **Letter** regarding remote learning (including FAQs)
- **Letter** regarding supervision of critical workers' children and children identified as vulnerable
- **Leaflet** regarding 'Helping your child at home'
- **Groupcall** to parents of children in receipt of Free School Meals outlining how the voucher system will work.

Tutors have spent time working through the slides attached to this email with their tutor groups this morning. I'd be grateful if you could take the time to read through them too, so that you are able to reinforce some of these key messages as we work together to support your child(ren).

Safeguarding

We always remind students how to stay safe when school closes at the end of every term. It is even more important, as we move to social distancing, that students do not make choices that make them vulnerable. In particular, please discuss and reinforce the following with your child:

DO

- Stay in contact with positive support networks remotely through phone calls or social media
- Follow the latest government and scientific advice about social distancing
- Keep in contact with your tutor through google classroom (tutors will be checking in with you)
- Focus on regular sleep, meals and exercise - keep a routine
- Make sure parents know where you are
- Be aware of your physical security; be wary of strangers if you are on your own
- Access online mental wellbeing support through Kooth and ChatHealth, accessible through the Student Wellbeing tile or at <https://sites.google.com/ashlyns.herts.sch.uk/wellbeingforstudents/home>
- Remember that, whilst the school building is closed, learning online continues

DON'T

- Don't give out personal information online or on social media - private means private
- Don't 'friend' or communicate with people online who you do not know in person
- Don't post photographs or images that you would not be happy for your parent to see
- Don't post hurtful or thoughtless comments on social media - be positive
- Don't take risks with your personal safety - even in times like these, strangers are strangers

If you have any wellbeing or safeguarding concerns, please do contact the school via admin@ashlyns.herts.sch.uk; or call 101; or Children's Services if a child is at immediate risk of significant harm (0300 123 4043).

It is really important that students respect that this unprecedented move to close schools is to support social distancing and reduce transmission. As such, for the majority of time it is expected that they will be at home to help further prevent the spread of the virus. Under no circumstances should they be on the school site, unless they are a child for whom supervision is being organised.

As we all move forward to a very different way of working, we appreciate there may be challenges and teething issues. We hope you will bear with us while we work through these. Please be reassured that, whilst the physical school building is closed for most students, Ashlyns School will continue to do our very best to provide support and guidance to your children. Our communications will continue on a regular basis.

Finally, in what has been a challenging week for everyone, I would like to express my thanks to our superb staff, our dedicated and supportive governors and to our incredible parent body for their offers of help, support and notes of appreciation. It has been very much appreciated. I often say how proud I am of our students - but their conduct, maturity and social responsibility has been simply phenomenal. We very much look forward to their safe and speedy return and wish them well over the coming weeks.

Yours sincerley

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shapland', with a stylized flourish above the first letter.

James Shapland
Headteacher