

## Covid-19 – Update from SAST

18<sup>th</sup> March 2020

As a Trust, we are taking seriously the risk of the Covid-19 virus, and would like to reassure parents, students and staff that action is being taken and contingency plans are in place. The approach in the Trust and the schools has been to focus on “keeping calm and carrying on” and “controlling the controllables”. This has become increasingly challenging with scenarios rapidly changing. We look forward to clear direction from the Government in due course at this very difficult time for all. We are closely monitoring the national situation, and following guidance issued by Public Health England and the Department for Education. This is an evolving situation and we will issue further guidance going forwards. Please stay up to date with the latest NHS guidance which can be found here: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

### **Changes to how we operate**

We are blessed to have really committed and dedicated staff, and we appreciate all they are doing to continue to provide education. In this period, whilst schools remain open and there is advice against non-essential travel, we will make amendments to how we operate. The priority is to provide continuity as best we can which does mean making temporary changes to the way we operate. This will include:

- No trips, fixtures or other events
- Cancelling Parent Meetings
- Limiting school staff meetings
- No Local Governing Board or Trustee Meetings
- Limiting access to visitors
- Revising arrangements and considering the need for assemblies/Acts of Worship that would be larger gatherings

### **School Closures**

It is our intention that the disruption of education to students is minimised as much as possible but we would also like to prepare everyone for future scenarios. The decision to close schools lies with the DfE, unless a school does not have sufficient staff levels to be able to operate safely. In this instance, the decision as to whether a school can continue to stay open fully or partially will be a local one through joint discussion between the Trust and the Headteacher. It will be determined by the availability of staff, the number of pupils and other local factors. Year groups approaching public examinations (Years 11 and 13 in secondary schools) will take priority.

If the government decides to implement a programme of school closures to attempt to contain the spread of the virus, teaching staff will set and publish work that pupils can complete at home. All schools have advanced plans to provide education and learning should there be full school closures. This will utilise remote learning opportunities to support children and parents. We have emphasised the importance of keeping these arrangements simple.

Our schools take pride in being at the heart of our local communities. In the longer term, it may be necessary to support other local initiatives, for example to help provide meals for those eligible for free school meals, or providing childcare for key workers. Our Headteachers feel strongly about our moral responsibility to play our part as best we can.

We are facing a period of upheaval over the coming months, but the welfare of our students and staff will continue to be our top priority. We will continue to provide regular updates and will share guidance we receive as soon as possible.

Thank you for all your support and co-operation.

Yours sincerely  
Steve Hillier  
CEO, SAST