



Bexley Grammar School
Danson Lane, Welling, Kent, DA16 2BL
A Specialist Language College
and IB World School
Tel: 020 8304 8538

19th March 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

Early closure today, Thursday 19th March

Years 7, 8 and 9 students leave at 2.15pm

Year 12 students may leave at 12.35pm

Years 10, 11, and 13 students may leave at 1.25pm

Urgent, new information:

School closure until further notice from 12.35pm on Friday 20th March.

All students will finish at the end of period 4 (12.35pm)

Cold food will be offered

Students empty lockers and leave school by 1.00pm

You will have heard the Prime Minister's announcement yesterday afternoon. **I am closing the school to the majority of our students until further notice from 12.35pm on Friday.**

Students should ensure that they empty their lockers today and tomorrow and ensure that they have everything they need to be able to work from home before they leave.

The school will remain open from **Monday 23rd March**, as specified in yesterday's announcement, to children of key workers, children with EHCPs, Looked After Children and children with appointed social workers. **Parents of these students will be contacted soon to make arrangements.** Arrangements are already being made to support students who currently receive free school meals.

Public Examinations - GCSEs and IB

The Prime Minister announced that this year's academic exams in May and June will not now take place. The Secretary of State for Education published a statement last night:

"We can confirm that we will not go ahead with assessments or exams, and that we will not be publishing performance tables for this academic year.

We will work with the sector and Ofqual to ensure children get the qualifications they need.

My Department is working closely with local authorities, representatives of early years, schools and head teachers, regional school commissioners and bodies such as Ofsted and Ofqual about how to deliver this change as effectively as possible.

And we will do whatever is necessary to support local authorities, settings, schools and teachers through the weeks and months ahead."

Without further information, this places us in a very difficult position, unable to answer all the questions that you and your children will have. However, we are reassured that no student's progress will be impeded as a result.

Year 13 students

Year 13 students will be worried about their university entrance in the autumn but we must take comfort from the fact that all students in the country are in the same situation with regard to their future and that none will be disadvantaged as a result. The good news is that the IB is actively looking into solutions and is very aware of the variation in situations in different countries around the world and is communicating with us.

Our advice to Year 13 students is to continue working to complete all IA work that can be done at home. They should not be concerned over incomplete IAs that require school facilities to complete - we will work with the IB to ensure that students are not disadvantaged by such situations. **All Year 13 students must continue with examination preparation** - the IB has not cancelled any examinations. We will continue to plan for them, as scheduled after Easter, but will let you know as soon as we hear of any change to this.

Year 11 students

Year 11 students must continue with their examination preparation despite yesterday's announcement because the government has not yet outlined its methodology for determining students' progress/grades. Students should remain focused on the expectations of the specifications in each of their subjects in terms of the assessment objectives, until we find out what methodology will be used in the absence of exams.

I, along with other Headteachers, will continue to use our positions to lobby the government for answers and clarity in the days ahead.

Please, resist the urge to email and phone with questions at this time. Staff in school are still under unreasonable duress with an increasing number of colleagues unable to attend school through sickness or self-isolation requirements. We simply cannot be expected to reply to individual parents separately asking the questions that we all share. I will continue to provide answers and guidance as soon as I am able.

Remote Learning plan

Our exhausted teachers will soon be turning their full attention to the provision of remote learning activities for students during this indefinite school closure. Whilst our ambition is for students to continue their studies seamlessly, we must be realistic about what is achievable, which includes being aware of the competing demands on students, parents and teachers in our home contexts during these challenging circumstances.

Although many aspects of remote learning are familiar to both teachers and students, wholesale remote learning for over a period of weeks is something new to us all; our guidelines and expectations may have to evolve over time.

Lastly, remote learning material is unlikely to be available to students immediately despite our best efforts. We may need one or two days next week to finalise the first batch of learning before going live. **I ask, therefore, that students use the first day or two next week to catch up on any unfinished work, complete existing homework assignments and work on any longer-term projects that they may have.**

Please continue to monitor ParentPay emails and the school website regularly for any further announcements.

Finally, thank you to all those parents/carers who have contacted us in different ways to express their appreciation for how we have been keeping your children safe in such challenging and uncertain times.

Thank you for your support.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'SE Elphick', written in a cursive style.

Steve Elphick
Headteacher