

**North Bridge House
Prep School**

Wednesday 18th March 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians

As you know, our aim in managing the unprecedented development of coronavirus has been to ensure we can keep our children safe while acting calmly and proportionately in response to unfolding events. However, it is with a heavy heart and yet a clear conscience that we have decided to close the school from today – Wednesday 18th March (16.00pm) until at least Wednesday 22nd April 2020.

Until now we have sought to follow all UK government advice, which has been to keep schools open while taking precautions against coronavirus. However, the majority of parents have assessed that they do not now wish their children to come physically to school and attendance has dropped to below 50%. We surveyed all parents yesterday and over two thirds were in favour of transitioning to remote and online learning ahead of Government advice to close schools. I'm pleased to say that 97% of parents indicated that the communications regarding Coronavirus have been timely and constructive and that 88% feel that the actions we have taken to date have been timely and proportionate.

It has been very challenging to maintain effective operation of the school given increasing staff absences due to the need for self-isolation following recent Government advice. I'd like to thank all my staff sincerely for the huge effort they have made to keep the school running well. By closing our physical campus now during term-time I am confident that we can transition to remote and online learning efficiently as staff will now have time to focus on this important change. I would like to emphasise that although the school is closing, the teaching and learning will continue.

I appreciate this news is unsettling but want to reassure you of the steps we are taking to provide support for our students and parents during the closure. As you know, we've been working closely with our Cognita colleagues in Asia, where some countries have had mandatory school closures for many weeks. Our plan for North Bridge House Prep is informed by the practice they've put in place and we are confident we have an effective strategy for our children to continue learning.

We appreciate that there will be an impact on parents and our plan includes advice for you. With that in mind, our Group Wellbeing Director Beth Kerr has prepared the attached 'Be Well Tips' for parents on supporting your child during a school closure.

Thank you in advance for your support at this challenging time. Our teachers have been working hard in anticipation of a closure. All our efforts are concentrated on two priorities: maintaining the wellbeing of our children and ensuring the continuity of their education in the days or weeks to come.

I am aware that a number of parents work for the NHS for whom childcare considerations may be a particular concern. We will therefore remain open and will continue to care for the children of all NHS staff for the remainder of this week. We would like to extend this further and we will share details in due course.

Attached to this letter is a document which explains how we will continue to educate your children – remotely in the first instance (until Friday 27th March), and then online via Microsoft Teams from Monday 30th March.

All teachers will be on their school email address. We will continue to communicate closely with you throughout the closure and will update as soon as we have more information regarding when school will reopen. Please do not hesitate to contact me directly (james.stenning@northbridgehouse.com) if you have any questions or you would like to discuss this with me personally.

Yours faithfully



James Stenning
Head Teacher

