



North Bridge House
Senior Canonbury

Wednesday 18th March 2020

Dear Parent and Guardians,

As you know, our aim in managing the unprecedented development of coronavirus has been to ensure that we can keep our children safe while acting calmly and proportionately in response to unfolding events. Unfortunately, we have now taken the decision that we must close the school from tomorrow 19th March, until at least the end of the school term.

The school day will continue as normal today. The lower and middle school will be dismissed from 15:55. Sixth form lessons will go ahead until 16:55, if your child has a period 9 lesson. From tomorrow, 19th March 2020, we will commence our remote learning. Online learning via Teams will begin no later than 5-days after the remote learning period and for some classes sooner. Details on when classes will be moved over to Teams will be posted on Firefly for students. Online learning will follow term dates for as long as is necessary.

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 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 we 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 Canonbury 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.

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.

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.

During the first week of closure, material will be set for students to complete on FireFly. In each subject, students will be able to submit their work to subject teachers and receive feedback as they would if they were in the school building. We recommend that students complete this work by following their usual timetable e.g. *if they would normally have an English lesson during Lesson 1, they should complete the work between 9:00 and 9:50*. Again, no later than Thursday 26th March we will be delivering lessons online. These lessons will be delivered via Microsoft Teams. The details on how to login on to this will be sent to you in due course.

I have asked teachers to inform the relevant Heads of Year if a child is not completing work via Firefly. However, if for any reason your child is unable to attend school virtually, please email canonbury@northbridgehouse.com

A copy of your child's timetable can be accessed via the home page on FireFly. We have spoken to the children today and yesterday and they understand the importance of engaging in learning via Firefly and keeping up with their lessons. Clearly this will be a new way of working and learning for us all and we expect to adapt the programme as we go.

Our teachers have been preparing well for the possibility 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.

All teachers will be on their school email address and will be contactable either directly or through the school office. In particular, Mr O'Neil and Mr Margerison, pastoral SLT leaders, are still available via email dan.o'neil@northbridgehouse.com and alex.margerison@northbridgehouse.com, respectively, should you have any concerns about the welfare of your children whilst away from school. 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.

I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank you all for your support during this very difficult time. The staff and students in school have shown wonderful resilience and have remained calm and determined at all times. We realise that the situation will be ongoing for some time and we recognise that it is going to lead to many more challenges in the coming weeks. I thank you in advance for your support and patience whilst we tackle these uncharted waters.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further questions. I can be contacted directly at Brendan.pavey@northbridgehouse.com.

Kind regards,



Brendan Pavey