

Droylsden Academy is a good school

A LETTER FROM MR WILSON

Dear Parent/Carer

You will all be aware that schools, nationally, are closing today for the foreseeable future. We are incredibly sad that the Government has had to make this decision but we understand that it is necessary. We also understand the additional stress that this will place on many families who may already have concerns and worries about the immediate and longer-term future. We hope that you are able to manage the current difficulties and that your family remain healthy and safe.

We are, believe it or not, missing our students, your children, already and are looking forward to welcoming them back when we re-open, whenever that may be. In the meantime the following arrangements have been put in place:

Attendance at school

The most recent scientific advice on how to further limit the spread of COVID-19 is clear. **If children can stay safely at home then they should as this will limit the chance of the virus spreading.** That is why the government has asked parents to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and asked schools to remain open **only for those children who absolutely need to attend.**

Please, therefore, follow these key principles:

1. If it is at all possible for children to be at home, then they should be.
2. Parents should not rely for childcare upon those who are advised to be in the stringent social distancing category such as grandparents, friends, or family members with underlying conditions.
3. Parents should also do everything they can to ensure children are not mixing socially in a way which can continue to spread the virus. They should observe the same social distancing principles as adults

The fewer children making the journey to school, and the fewer children in educational settings, the lower the risk that the virus can spread and infect vulnerable individuals in wider society.

However, there are two groups of students who may still attend school, as of Monday, if their parents wish. These are:

1. **Children who require additional support, defined as those with an EHCP, Looked After Children and those and In Care and those with an appointed social worker.** If we have identified that your child requires this additional support, we should have already contacted you.
2. Children whose parents or carers are **'Key Workers'** may also attend school if parents and carers wish. Further information on those roles that are defined as those of key workers can be found below. Please contact the academy if, having checked the information below, you are a key worker and you would like your child to attend the Academy as normal.

We can therefore, as outlined above, continue to provide care for a **limited number of children** who are either vulnerable or whose parents are key workers and are critical to the Covid-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home.

Those students who are attending may arrive anytime from 7.30am for an 8.30am start and will go home at 3.00pm each day. **Students should wear full Academy uniform as normal.**

This provision will also be available during the Easter Holidays should families need it and further information will be available over the next fortnight.

Students attending school will be completing on-line work set by their teachers. Staff will also be in each day to supervise them and provide support as necessary.

The following groups of workers are defined by the Government as key workers. If you think that your role falls into one of these groups, you should confirm with your employer that, based on their business continuity arrangements, their specific role is necessary for the continuation of this essential public service.

1. **Health and social care:** This includes but is not limited to doctors, nurses, midwives, paramedics, social workers, care workers, and other frontline health and social care staff including volunteers; the support and specialist staff required to maintain the UK's health and social care sector; those working as part of the health and social care supply chain, including producers and distributors of medicines and medical and personal protective equipment.
2. **Education and childcare:** This includes nursery and teaching staff, social workers and those specialist education professionals who must remain active during the COVID-19 response to deliver this approach.
3. **Key public services:** This includes those essential to the running of the justice system, religious staff, charities and workers delivering key frontline services, those responsible for the management of the deceased, and journalists and broadcasters who are providing public service broadcasting.

Great learning through politeness, honesty and hard work

4. **Local and national government:** This only includes those administrative occupations essential to the effective delivery of the COVID-19 response or delivering essential public services such as the payment of benefits, including in government agencies and arm's length bodies.
5. **Food and other necessary goods:** This includes those involved in food production, processing, distribution, sale and delivery as well as those essential to the provision of other key goods (for example hygienic and veterinary medicines).
6. **Public safety and national security:** This includes police and support staff, Ministry of Defence civilians, contractor and armed forces personnel (those critical to the delivery of key defence and national security outputs and essential to the response to the COVID-19 pandemic), fire and rescue service employees (including support staff), National Crime Agency staff, those maintaining border security, prison and probation staff and other national security roles, including those overseas.
7. **Transport:** This includes those who will keep the air, water, road and rail passenger and freight transport modes operating during the COVID-19 response, including those working on transport systems through which supply chains pass.
8. **Utilities, communication and financial services:** This includes staff needed for essential financial services provision (including but not limited to workers in banks, building societies and financial market infrastructure), the oil, gas, electricity and water sectors (including sewerage), information technology and data infrastructure sector and primary industry supplies to continue during the COVID-19 response, as well as key staff working in the civil nuclear, chemicals, telecommunications (including but not limited to network operations, field engineering, call centre staff, IT and data infrastructure, 999 and 111 critical services), postal services and delivery, payments providers and waste disposal sectors.

Students studying from home

As of Monday 23rd March, staff will be setting on-line work for all year groups through 'Google Classroom' or similar on-line learning platforms. Guidance on accessing these resources has been made available to all students and is also on the Academy website. **Please encourage your child to access these resources so that they do not fall behind with their studies. This is really important for all year groups, but particularly Year 10 who will be missing a big chunk of time on their GCSE courses.** In addition, your child can contact their teachers by email if they need help. We would ask that, where possible, students email their teachers at the time that they would normally be having that particular lesson. Staff will respond to any queries as soon as they can and within 24 hours.

Work will still be set for Year 11 students even though their examinations have been cancelled. **We strongly recommend that, where students are going on to study a subject at College, they complete the course and put themselves in the strongest possible position for September.**

Free School Meals

If your child is in school then food will be available from the Food Service Area as normal.

Great learning through politeness, honesty and hard work

As you may be aware, the Government will be introducing a voucher system for students who are on Free School Meals and who are not in school. We think that students will be able to use this voucher to buy food at one of the large Supermarket chains although, as yet, this needs to be confirmed. We will send out further information along with any vouchers as soon as we have them.

In the meantime, students on Free School Meals who are not attending school will be able to collect a packed lunch from the Academy if they wish. Packed lunches can be collected from Reception between 12.30pm and 1.00pm each day. If you want your child to collect a packed lunch, you must phone or email Reception and let us know.

Support for students

We will continue to provide pastoral support for students even though we are closed. As such, students or parents/carers may email Year Managers or Year Leaders who will endeavour to help with any concerns. The email addresses of the Year Managers and year Leaders are as follows:

Miss Barratt (Year Leader for Year 7): kbarratt@droylsdenacademy.com

Mr Darnbrough (Year Manager for Year 7): jdarnbrough@droylsdenacademy.com

Mrs Pancholi (Year Leader for Year 8): spancholi@droylsdenacademy.com

Mrs Isherwood (Year Leader for Year 9): misherwood@droylsdenacademy.com

Mrs Khanom-Rashid (Year Manager for Year 9): skhanom-rashid@droylsdenacademy.com

Mr Gately (Year Leader for Year 10): bgately@droylsdenacademy.com

Ms Stansfield (Year Manager for Year 10): dstansfield@droylsdenacademy.com

Mr Frost (Year Leader for Year 11): dfrost@droylsdenacademy.com

Mr Royle (Year Manager for Year 11): aroyle@droylsdenacademy.com

Thank you

Finally, I would like to thank parents and carers for their support and understanding. As outlined at the beginning of my letter I hope you are able to manage the current difficulties and that your family remain healthy and safe. In the meantime, please contact the Academy if there is anything we may be able to help with.

Yours faithfully

Mr P. Wilson
Headteacher

YEAR 11

As you will be aware GCSE exams for Year 11 students have been cancelled this summer and, in effect, the school year and their time at the Academy has come to a premature end. Whilst many people may think that Year 11 would be delighted to leave school early and miss the stress that GCSE examinations bring, the opposite is true. The vast majority of our Year 11 students have worked so hard and are 'gutted' that they will not now have the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understanding in the exams that they had been working towards since the formal start of their courses in September 2018.

Whilst we are told that students, nationally, will not be penalised and that they will get the grades that they deserve, there is still the uncertainty of not knowing how this will be done and the knowledge that this is, of course, now out of their hands. We are told that GCSE grades will probably be based in some way on student predicted grades and, if so, there is some consolation in that, for the majority of students, their projected grades reflect the hard work that they have put in.

For most of us, leaving school marks an important step in our life and is normally celebrated in style with a Leavers Assembly and Celebration, 'Memory Books', 'Hoodies', 'shirt signing' and, of course, the 'Prom'. We hope that year 11 enjoyed their 'send off' on Thursday although obviously, with the speed at which things have happened, there are many things that they have missed out on.

There was a lovely atmosphere at the Year Group's final Assembly on Thursday morning with the Food and Nutrition group then making cup-cakes for the year group followed by some impromptu musical performances and of course the ritual shirt signing.

Goodbye Year 11, we wish you the brightest of futures and look forward to hearing about your successes and achievements in the years to come.



Great learning through politeness, honesty and hard work



Great learning through politeness, honesty and hard work



COVID-19 RESPONSE



Continuing our support

In line with government advice, we are working in a more flexible way. We understand that this is a worrying time for everyone, especially with unprecedented school closures and uncertainty around exams. We wanted to let you know that, although we are currently working differently, we are still working to provide you with the help and support you might need over the coming weeks and months.

Our team of career advisers is on hand every weekday (9-4:30pm) to offer information, advice and guidance on more than just careers; many of you will have questions and concerns about everything from exams, college and education through to finance, housing and employment and we are here to support you and your family in these rapidly changing, difficult times.

For any questions we cannot answer, we will ensure you are put in touch with the people best placed to offer you the right support. Rest assured, Positive Steps will do all they can to continue providing a service to the young people and families of Tameside.

How to contact us:

- Careers Helpline: 0800 484 0407 / 0161 621 9292
- Email: tamesidecareers@positive-steps.org.uk
- Website: www.positive-steps-org.uk ('Contact Us' section)
- Facebook: @PositiveSteps80 Twitter: @PositiveSteps

We look forward to hearing from you & helping in any way we can.

Positive Steps ... not just a careers service

Tameside Careers Helpline: **0800 484 0407**

web: www.positive-steps.org.uk email: tamesidecareers@positive-steps.org.uk

Great learning through politeness, honesty and hard work