



**RAINHILL
HIGH SCHOOL**

PARENT NEWSLETTER

IN PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE

20th March 2020

Dear Parents / Carers,

Re: Coronavirus update – Arrangements from Monday 23rd March 2020

Following on from my last update I can now give you some further details of the way forward in the coming weeks.

How will the school communicate to parents and students whilst not at school?

Please note that this is a national closure with quick changing and challenging circumstances. In order to ensure that we stay in contact the website will be the main source of information.

Parents will continue to receive the weekly parent newsletter. If we need to get hold of you more quickly we will use Edulink.

Students have been informed that there will be a weekly student newsletter and this is to be accessed from the front page of the website. This is to ensure that we maintain contact with all our students in their time away from us.

If you experience ICT difficulties, please use the 'Experiencing Technical Difficulties' button on the front page of the website. An ICT technician will deal with your problem directly.

If you need to contact us about an issue please use the 'Contact us' button which is also on the front page of the website. Please be aware that staff have been asked to work remotely, wherever possible, and we will deal with the query as quickly as possible. Please be patient.

In the event of an emergency please use the school telephone number where a skeleton staff member will pick up the call.

Who is school open for from Monday 23rd March?

We have now identified the students that the school is required to remain open for. Essential worker parents have been contacted with details of what is expected. If you are concerned that you have not been contacted please get in touch.

All other children will need to stay at home, so we ask that you do not send your child into school from Monday onwards.

What we'll continue doing while your child is at home

Your child's learning is important to us, so we will be helping your child to learn. We advise you to keep a routine in a place during the day so that good learning continues and the transition back into school is as smooth as possible.

All Y7 – Y13 students have their Show My Homework log in and accounts will remain active. All work from their teachers is to be found here, students are to follow the instructions for individual subjects. Please note that they are able to contact their teacher via this platform.

Y11, Y12 & Y13 have also been asked to join Microsoft Teams where additional resources have also been made available.



- In addition, your child is to read for pleasure as much as possible. A list of appropriate books by English set are also published on the school website in student zone and are posted on Show My Homework.
- In order to support and consolidate learning students should make good use of their Key to Success files which contain their knowledge organisers. This is a great opportunity to reinforce existing learning through self-testing.
- The completion of work is being monitored by staff remotely, it is important that the work is completed.

What about public exams?

All external exams for this summer have been cancelled. We are still awaiting information about what the school will be required to provide the examination boards to ensure that students receive an accurate grade. We will update you on this matter when we have more information.

At this stage, this is as much information as I can give you, no doubt there will be further information later today and next week. I appreciate your patience in these matters and understand that the current circumstances are far from ideal.

As you are aware national school closures aim to minimise the spread of the Covid 19 virus. It is important that children are kept at home and follow the government advice in order to ensure that measures taken have the maximum impact in the shortest possible space of time so that we can return to normality quickly.

Social contact should be minimised until the advice changes. Please make sure that your children understand that they cannot use any of the school facilities whilst school is closed.

[Please click here for the latest advice for schools.](#)

I will be in touch at the earliest opportunity to advise when Rainhill can reopen and will very much look forward to the day that it does. At this stage we have no clear indication of when this might be and should plan accordingly.

For now, I wish all our families a safe and healthy few weeks.

Yours faithfully,

Mrs Josie Thorogood
Headteacher



Please see below, information from the Government regarding the closure of educational settings. We will keep you updated of any further releases and will inform you immediately of when we expect our school to fully re-open, which we hope will be shortly after the Easter break.

If everybody follows the Government's guidelines then we will be able to get back to 'business as usual' sooner rather than later.

As ever, we are here to support you and therefore would encourage you to continue to contact the school if you have any issues and/or queries in the coming weeks.

Best wishes,

Rob Owens
Chief Operating Officer

1.1 What age groups does this cover?

The changes cover children at registered childcare providers (including nurseries and childminders), primary and secondary schools and further education colleges. This is for both state-funded and independent schools.

1.2 Will it be mandatory for all schools, colleges and registered childcare providers to remain open in some form?

We are asking schools, colleges, nurseries, childminders and other registered childcare settings to remain open for children of critical workers and vulnerable children where they can.

We understand that some may be unable to do so especially if they are experiencing severe staff shortages. We will work with local areas to use neighbouring schools, colleges and childcare providers to continue to support vulnerable children and children of critical workers.

1.3 How long will schools and colleges be closed for?

Due to the coronavirus outbreak, schools, colleges and childcare providers will be closed to the majority of pupils until further notice.

1.4 Will this apply to independent schools and boarding schools?

Yes. We are asking independent schools and boarding schools to do the same as state schools and remain open for critical workers and vulnerable children.

1.5 Will registered childcare providers, schools and colleges be open over Easter holidays for holiday clubs and childcare?

Where possible, we would encourage childcare providers, schools and colleges to continue to look after critical workers' children and vulnerable children throughout the Easter holidays.

1.6 I am a critical worker or have a vulnerable child - can you guarantee that my child will attend their usual school or childcare provider?

We are expecting the majority of settings to stay open for the children of critical workers and vulnerable children so they can continue to attend their usual provider, but we acknowledge this will be impossible for some - such as small rural schools.

Where a setting is unable to stay open, we will work with the local educational authority, regional school commissioners and neighbouring providers to find an alternative setting for their pupils.

1.7 I am a critical worker or have a vulnerable child - how will my child get to school if the only school open is not nearby?

We are working closely with local authorities to ensure that children can attend the best setting for them, and will provide transport arrangements to support them.



1.8 I am a critical worker or have a vulnerable child but I don't want to send my child in to school or childcare, do I have to?

Many parents working in these critical sectors may be able to ensure their child is kept at home. Every child who can be safely cared for at home should be.

This is an offer to parents and carers and there is no requirement for parents and carers to send their children to school if they do not need or wish to do so.

For vulnerable children, your child's social worker will work with you to assess the best option for your child.

1.9 Does this affect universities and other higher education institutions?

Universities and other higher education providers should make their own judgements based on latest Public Health England guidance. Vice chancellors are well placed to make decisions about their own institution, and many have already moved all their teaching online. The government is supporting them with these decisions.

Advice continues to be that all student accommodation should remain open unless advised otherwise by Public Health England. Many universities provide homes to international students, estranged students and care leavers who might not have anywhere else to go.

The Department is working with the Home Office to avoid individuals and institutions being penalised if online provision inadvertently leads to *non-compliance with Tier 4 visa rules*.

1.10 Does this apply to special schools?

We recognise that children and young people with special educational needs and disability (SEND) and their parents and carers are facing numerous challenges as a result of coronavirus. We are encouraging local authorities to keep open both residential special schools and residential specialist colleges wherever possible. In addition, we want to keep the majority of day special schools and colleges open, including moving staff into these settings to avoid closure.

Special schools, colleges and local authorities are advised to make case by case basis assessments of the health and safeguarding considerations of pupils and students on an education, health and care (EHC) plan. For some, they will be safer in an education provision. For others, they will be safer at home. We trust leaders and parents to make these decisions and will support them as required.

1.11 Why is my nursery telling me that they will continue to charge me during corona virus-related closures?

The government acknowledges that in many cases, the insurance that early years providers have will not cover them for income lost during COVID-19-related closures. That is one of the reasons why it announced on 17 March that government would not claw back early years entitlements funding from local authorities during closures, or where children are withdrawn because of COVID-19. This protects a significant proportion of early years providers' income. In addition, the government has set out a range of support for businesses to reduce the impact of COVID-19 on them. This includes a business rate holiday for all private childcare providers for one year from 1 April. Local authorities will be fully compensated for the cost of this. In light of these steps taken already, we are asking providers to be reasonable and balanced in their dealings with parents. The government is urgently keeping what further support businesses may require under close review.

2. Exams

2.1 What will happen to exams?

Primary assessments, including SATs, and exams including GCSEs, AS levels and A levels will not go ahead this summer.



We are working with the sector and Ofqual to ensure young people get the qualifications they need. Further details will be provided shortly.

3. Vulnerable children

3.1 Is my child counted as vulnerable?

Vulnerable children include those who have a social worker and those with education, health and care (EHC) plans. Children who have a social worker include children in need, children who have a child protection plan and those who are looked after by the local authority. We will work with schools, early years, FE providers and local authorities to help identify the children who most need support at this time. We know that schools will also want to look to support other children who are vulnerable where they are able to do so.

3.2 What will happen with free school meals for those not in school and colleges?

We know that free school meals are important for many families. To make sure eligible children can continue to be supported, we will give schools and colleges the flexibility to provide meals or vouchers to children eligible for free school meals. They will be reimbursed by the Department. As soon as possible, we will put in place a national voucher system.

More information on [support for pupils eligible for school meals](#) is available.

4. Critical workers

4.1 Will I be counted as a critical worker?

Critical workers include NHS staff, police, farmers and food retail workers, who need to be able to go out to work.

In order to continue to offer critical services as part of the country's ongoing response to the virus, children of workers who form a central part of effort - such as NHS workers, police and delivery drivers - will also continue to attend school, college or childcare provider.

A full [list of critical workers and further information](#) is available.

4.2 If only one parent or carer is a critical worker, can I send my children in to school?

Children with at least one parent or carer who are identified as critical workers by the government can send their children to school if required.

5. Resources and support

What support will be available to parents to help them educate their children at home?

More information will follow about what DfE is doing to support parents. We are working with the BBC and others to provide resources for children to access while at home. For parents with children under five years old see [hungrylittleminds.campaign.gov.uk](https://www.hungrylittleminds.campaign.gov.uk)

5.1 There is too much pressure on broadband connections in my area - how can my child do online learning?

The government is having regular calls with the major fixed and mobile operators, and with Ofcom, to monitor the situation and ensure that any problems on the networks are rapidly addressed and rectified.

We fully understand the importance of having reliable internet connectivity at this time, so that people can work from home wherever possible and access critical public services online, including health information.