

17 March 2020



Holderness Academy
& Sixth Form College

Dear Parent/Carer

I am writing to you again with a further update on our response to the spread of Coronavirus. Firstly, you will be aware that guidance on staying at home has changed and is as follows:

- Schools are not directed to close at this point and decisions remain local decisions.
- Anyone with a new continuous cough or high temperature should stay at home for 14 days, as should members of that household.
- Everyone should minimise social mixing in the community (being in school is not defined as social mixing).
- The government is expected, by the end of the week, to direct all 'at risk' people to stay at home for a period of 12-weeks. At risk people include everyone over 70, pregnant women and anyone with a serious underlying health condition. Further information is available on our website.

I would urge you to refer to this information in deciding whether your child should attend school. I recognise fully these are difficult decisions and we support you in thinking about what is best for your family.

There is much discussion and debate about the government's decision to keep schools open. For as long as it remains part of the government's strategy to keep schools open, I am obliged to attempt to do that each day. The starting point for decision making each day always has to be whether the school has enough staff on site to keep children safe. As more staff are required to stay at home either because they have symptoms, a family member has symptoms or because they are in a vulnerable category, we have fewer staff available. This morning our staff absence has increased and any member of staff who is absent is expected to be for a period of between 14 days and 12 weeks. I support any member of staff who belong to a vulnerable group who chooses to stay at home from today; it is simply wrong, for example, to wait a few days when the risks of social contact for them have been made clear.

I want to be completely open with you about how we will make decisions and possible scenarios over the next few days and weeks.

- Today we will plan for tomorrow and it will be based around a simple question – do we have enough staff to open and keep our students safe?
- If we reach a point where we do not have enough staff to keep the whole school open, we will make a decision to see how much of the school we can safely keep open and a partial opening will be confirmed.

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- Where we have a partial opening (open but not for all students) we will work in priority order, trying to stay open for Years 13 and 11 and we will be confirming each day if this is still sustainable.
- Remote learning tasks are now available on our website for all students who are at home.
- We will ensure we provide access to meals for students who are currently registered to receive free school meals in the event that the school is closed or partially closed.

I will try to continue to communicate clearly with you and give you as much notice of any changes as possible. You should expect changes in how we operate including students not having their usual teachers or being in their usual groups.

I recognise that as we move into a more difficult situation many parents will agree with my decisions while others may not and that is absolutely fine. Rest assured, we are doing everything we can in the best interests of our community.

I wish the very best to you and your family.

Yours sincerely

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

Mr S Wilson
Headteacher