

March 2020



**SIR JAMES SMITH'S
COMMUNITY SCHOOL**

Dear Parent/Carer

Whilst news of school closures across the country hasn't come as a surprise, it is still a shock for pupils and staff alike. I know that as parents, many of you are also feeling alarmed at what the coming weeks and months may bring now that the reassuring certainties of school life have been interrupted. For nearly 60 years now, Sir James Smith's School has fulfilled two crucial roles; educating the children of North Cornwall and supporting local families where needed. Whatever else may be happening around us, these two roles will continue to be the fundamental business of Sir James Smith's School. With the current crisis, a third role is now being assumed, that of supporting the national effort to tackle coronavirus.

The school will be closed to almost all pupils from Monday to help slow the rate at which coronavirus is spread and so it is important that children adhere to guidelines about social distancing (or self-isolation if required). This is a message that has been shared within school and I would urge you as parents to reinforce this at home.

Pupils in Y11 will not be required to come into school tomorrow having taken the opportunity today to say their goodbyes to friends and staff. They have been a credit to their teachers and yourselves in how they have risen to this extraordinary time and we all look forward to celebrating with them at the leavers Prom at some point in the future. The school will be open to all other year groups tomorrow as it has been all week.

You have already received detailed information to help support the education of your child during this indefinite period of social distancing. Staff here have worked hard to provide your children with activities and resources to help them maintain their education whilst unable to come to school. In time there will be further updates from the school to support you in educating your children at home. If any child wishes to contact a teacher for help with any of the activities made available they should message their teacher using the Show My Homework website.

Work on how to support local families in receipt of free school meals is ongoing with the North Cornwall Learning Trust. A number of options are being looked into and the latest guidance considered. Further details will be shared when available and please contact the school if you believe you qualify, together we will be able to make sure you get the support you need.

The school will continue to open to the children of parents at the front line of efforts to tackle coronavirus. Schools have been instructed to provide supervision for children of key workers from Monday 23rd March, if either both parents are key workers, or, if the child is within a single parent family and the sole parent/carer is a key worker. At the time of writing the government has yet to provide a definitive list of who our key workers are but it is safe to assume any list will include; those working in the NHS, in care homes, in the blue light services and teachers. It is also likely to include people who are involved in essential retail delivery and those manufacturing equipment such as ventilators. We should receive a more specific definition soon, and if this definition changes, we will inform you. To help the school's planning I would ask you to complete the questionnaire which will be sent via Xpressions and email if you know that to continue helping the national effort to tackle coronavirus you will need your child to be in school. As details of transport arrangements are finalised the school will be in touch with those parents to whom this applies but as a starting point, knowing the numbers of children will be helpful as we plan for the weeks and months ahead.

Thankyou again for the messages of support the school has received over the last few days, it means a lot to colleagues to know their efforts are appreciated. Please be assured that everything which can be done to help will be done and that together we will come through the challenges that lie ahead.

Take care of yourselves, all the very best to all.

Yours faithfully

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