

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**23<sup>rd</sup> MARCH 2020**

We have put together a list of frequently asked questions to help parents and pupils through the implications of school closure and what this means for you and them in the future. There is more information on our website. If you still have further questions or queries, please do not hesitate to contact us at [info@thedeacademy.org](mailto:info@thedeacademy.org) and we will endeavour to get back to you as soon as possible.

Please remember that the situation is very fluid right now and that the answers below may no longer be valid when you look again. We will try and update them and add to them as often as we possibly can.

For ease of navigation, they have been grouped as follows

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## School Closure

### **How long will schools be closed for?**

It is very hard to say. Right now, they are closed until further notice to almost all pupils. We will follow Government advice and close for as long as needed to keep everyone safe. We will keep parents informed via our website.

### **How will I know when you will open again?**

Please check our website regularly for further information and updates. We will try and provide as much information as we possibly can.

### **What if I am concerned about my child?**

If you have concerns about a child at the school, you should contact us as soon as possible. We will do what we can to follow up. You can email Mr Mooney ([Declan.mooney@thedeacademy.org](mailto:Declan.mooney@thedeacademy.org)) or Mrs Smith ([Emily.smith@thedeacademy.org](mailto:Emily.smith@thedeacademy.org)) directly. If you believe a child is in immediate danger, please contact the emergency services who will assist.

## Vulnerable children and key workers

### **Who are vulnerable children?**

Vulnerable children are those with a social worker or have an EHCP. We have tried to contact all parents of these pupils to find out what provision needs to be put into place for them. If we haven't been able to get hold of you, please contact us as soon as possible if you intend to send your child to school from Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March.

### **Who are key workers?**

Key workers are defined [here](#). Broadly speaking, they are workers who are essential in the national response to this coronavirus. (i.e. NHS staff, the Emergency Services, etc.)

### **Why are schools being kept open for only vulnerable pupils or for the children of key workers?**

Schools are being kept open for these two groups because either:

- the Government considers it essential that the child is looked after and continues to receive support from their school during this time of closure; or
- it is essential that their parent(s) carry on going to work so that they can support the national response to COVID-19

### **For children attending school, is it open over the Easter holidays?**

The school will remain open to the children of key workers **ONLY**. Those children defined as vulnerable (those with a social worker or an EHCP) should **NOT ATTEND** over the Easter holiday.

### **My child is vulnerable or I am a key worker. Do I have to send my child to school?**

**NO**. You should **ONLY** send your child to school if there is **NO OTHER** appropriate care available. 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. You **MUST** let us know if you intend to send your child to school so we can plan for them. **ONLY** do so if it is **ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY** for you to go to work and no other arrangements are available.

### **My child or someone in my household shows the symptoms of fever or a continuous cough. Can I still send my child?**

**NO**. The guidance from Government about self-isolating **MUST** be followed by **EVERYONE**. Currently, it stands as follows but may change. It is important that you follow this advice at all times.

- If your **CHILD** has symptoms of fever or a continuous cough, they **MUST NOT** attend for a period of **7 DAYS**.
- If anyone in your **HOUSEHOLD** has symptoms of fever or a continuous cough, your child **MUST NOT** attend for a period of **14 DAYS**.

If your child or anyone in your household is experiencing any of the above, they **MUST NOT** attend the provision in line with the guidance above. If they develop symptoms while attending, parents / carers will be contacted and you will be expected to pick them up.

### **My child is entitled to Free School Meals (FSM). Will the school be continuing to provide them?**

Yes, we have been asked to keep this service going. From Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March, pupils who are entitled to Free School Meals should attend school between 12.30pm and 1.00pm to collect their food.

We are looking at voucher systems with local retailers for the long run. Once we have this operational, we will contact families about the process.

## **GCSE Exams**

### **What about GCSEs?**

The Government has also announced that all GCSE exams will not take place this year in May and June. This will be devastating news to pupils. Government have said qualifications will be awarded through an alternative mechanism - some details have been published [here](#) by the Government. We will be in touch with pupils and advise them accordingly when we have more information in due course.

**Is there a chance that the Government may change their mind and run some summer exams?**

**NO.** The exam boards will not be issuing papers this summer. This decision is **FINAL** and there will be no exams in May and June this year.

**Will they have the chance to re-take GCSEs next year if they don't agree with the grade they receive this year?**

Yes. Pupils can always take exams again in summer 2021 but there should be no reason for most of them to do so if they are awarded grades this summer. The school will pass on information to relevant pupils and parents as soon as we have it.

**What if I don't agree with the predicted grade that is awarded to my child? How do I know this was done fairly?**

If a pupil does not believe the correct process has been followed in their case they will be able to appeal on that basis. In addition, if they do not feel their calculated grade reflects their performance, they will have the opportunity to sit an exam, as soon as is reasonably possible after schools and colleges open again. Students will also have the option to sit their exams in summer 2021. We will issue more guidance on this when we have it from Government.

## **Home Learning**

**Will my child be behind in their learning? How will the school address this?**

Your child has some work to be doing now and it is important that they try and keep learning from home. Your child's teachers will be in touch with them on a regular basis to try and sustain their learning and we will assist in any way we can. We ask for all parents to support their child's learning from home as best possible. Once we return, we will do everything we can to ensure your child catches up on the missed time as best as we possibly can.

**How will my child continue learning if the school is closed?**

As a parent, the easiest way that you can support your child is by making sure that they have access to a computer and a quiet space to learn. This will enable them to access online materials and emails from their teachers so that they can continue their learning as best as possible in the given circumstances. This does not need to be an expensive device; anything with internet access should be sufficient. Pupils will already have many resources from their teachers which they can start to work through. Most work is posted on ClassCharts.

**If I don't have a computer at home, how can I help my child continue their learning?**

Your child will already have some resources with them which they can use – work packs have been provided for work up to the holiday and we will look into issuing further work on paper if the closure

continues after Easter. Many of the online learning resources are accessible via a smartphone or an app that pupils will be able to download.

### **Will my child's curriculum change next year because of the closure?**

That depends on how long the Government close all schools for. If the closure is for a very long time, there may be some impact on the curriculum for next year. We will advise you of this when we have more information and further guidance from the Government.

### **What are the key messages about good hygiene?**

Please speak to your child about the coronavirus and reiterate the key messages we have covered in assemblies about staying safe. They are:

- Additional hand washing with soap and water, especially before eating and after using toilets.
- Always coughing / sneezing into a tissue and disposing of it in a bin immediately.
- Avoid touching their face, and especially their eyes, nose and mouth.
- Avoid contact with others by not shaking hands, etc.
- Don't share drinks, bottles or plates.

### **How can I keep my child safe?**

The single most important thing to do is to keep them at home and self-isolate. The fewer children playing outside or socialising with friends and the fewer children in educational settings, the lower the risk that the virus can spread and infect vulnerable individuals in wider society.

## **Other**

### **What about trips I have already paid for?**

All trips for this academic year have been cancelled. We are working with operators to get refunds. We are aware that many parents would like the refunds as soon as possible. We will update you as soon as we have more information.

### **How will you find out GCSE options for pupils who will be starting GCSE courses next year?**

We will publish information once option choices have been finalised. Mr Mooney will be in touch with some students in due course.

### **What if I need more information?**

Please contact us at [info@thedeanacadmey.org](mailto:info@thedeanacadmey.org) and we will try and get back to you as soon as possible. I am sure you will appreciate that we won't always have the answers right now as we await further guidance and instructions from Government.