



PLATANOS COLLEGE

An outstanding school for
pupils of all abilities

26TH March 2020

RE: COVID- 19 SCHOOL CLOSURE UPDATE

Dear parent(s)/ carer(s),

UPDATE ON ARRANGEMENTS AT PLATANOS COLLEGE PLATANOS COLLEGE IS NOW FULLY CLOSED

It is with great regret that we have decided to close Platanos College to all, at least until after the Easter Holidays.

I feel the need to continue to explain our situation in order to assure our parents, we are doing all that we can.

There are a number of reasons for this:

- Before the government's decision to close schools, and to accommodate only children who were particularly vulnerable or who had parents or carers in critical jobs, children and their extended families were reporting feeling unwell, parents were also calling the school to say their children were unwell and they were self-isolating following medical guidance.
- As the week went on more and more members of staff were reporting symptoms which made it untenable to continue. Children and their extended family were reporting feeling unwell, parents were arriving to collect their children in order to begin a period of self-isolation.
- On Thursday 19th March, we already had a significant number of staff who were self-isolating following guidance from medical professionals. We decided at that point that we would not be able to support the school being kept open the following day. The government had been advising that staff should self-isolate if symptoms occurred.
- On Friday 20th March members of our staff attempted to come to work. Throughout the day, I was informed that more members of staff had become unwell. To open the school on Monday 23rd March would have been untenable.
- Due to the number of staff who travel by public transport, who have children under the age of 13 or with significant SEND, who have underlying medical conditions or live with people who are elderly or unwell, staff were informed they should not come to school on Monday 23rd March.

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- On Monday 23rd March we remained closed as we could not run the school in the usual way. The catering staff would not have been able to provide meals and, with the number of cleaning staff we would not have been able to sustain an appropriate level of health and safety necessary to prevent the spread of germs.
- On Tuesday 24th March our most vulnerable pupils were contacted, and parents opted to keep their child at home. We identified a very low number of pupils who had parents or carers who are in critical jobs. We know that this is a difficult time for key workers, however those parents who are key workers have been incredibly supportive and accommodated their children at home.
- Following the Prime Minister's announcement that evening, we took the decision to remain closed. We continue to work with our families to ensure they can make arrangements to keep their children at home.
- The staff at Platanos College are truly remarkable, they have very quickly set up the online school in order to carry on the learning for all pupils. Staff who are fit and able to work from home are doing so.
- Finally, given the Prime Minister's instructions, we simply cannot justify asking staff to come into work and risk becoming infected on their way to or from school or in school.

As a result, we are acting swiftly to provide you with this information.

At least one member of staff has lost a family member due to Covid-19 coronavirus. Over 30 members of staff are self-isolating.

Again, I apologise for any disappointment or inconvenience that these actions may cause. At this challenging time, our priority is for the wellbeing of our pupils, our staff and our community.

The following arrangements have already been implemented by the exceptional staff of Platanos College:

- All pupils have been given a login to Show My Homework and SAM learning.
- Work has been put up on the Show my homework website in most subjects.
- If you do not have a log-in, please email the school pastoral email:
year7pastoral@platanocollege.com year8pastoral@platanocollege.com
year9pastoral@platanocollege.com ks4pastoral@platanoscollege.com
- Senior staff WILL telephone parents and carers at least weekly to check on our pupils and to find out how the pupils are getting on with e-learning.

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Our advice to families at this challenging time is to:

- Follow the government guidance.
- Do whatever you can to keep safe and well.
- Keep in contact with the school whenever you need to: with your child's pastoral manager, or with a member of the senior leadership team.
- Create a family timetable and vary the activities, include exercise and e-learning to keep their minds lively and happy. Be creative.
- Remember, this is not forever.

We thank you for your understanding. We miss our pupils and it is our intention to re-open as soon as it is safe to do so under government guidance.

May God be with us. Always.

Yours sincerely,

Ms M Taybi

**Acting Headteacher
Platanos College**

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