

20<sup>th</sup> April 2020

Dear Parents, Carers, and Families,

We are starting the summer term with ongoing lockdown measures from the government for the Coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic. England now has 90,629 confirmed cases with 21,357 cases confirmed for London. The government's decision on 16<sup>th</sup> April to continue lockdown for a minimum of three more weeks is a serious sign of the power of this pandemic. The Department for Education are not able to tell us when schools will reopen.

We know the value of routines and structures for our pupils. We are going to transition from our interim measures to a more formal virtual school to provide these structures until schools reopen. We want to keep this model of a virtual school consistent and also ensure this is optional to you so that it supports your own plans with the lockdown.

Our virtual school remains committed to integrating creative arts, movement, life skills, and wellbeing across your child's weekly timetable. The virtual school will involve the following five features for learning opportunities:

- 1) Face-to-face teaching through pre-recorded videos in Week 1.
- 2) Differentiated learning activities designed by our school with specialist resources that include physical resources in Week 1.
- 3) Use of resources and learning opportunities from different organisations in Week 1.
- 4) Face-to-face teaching through live interactive learning starting in Week 2.
- 5) Physical resource pack to each child to support learning engagement in Week 2.

The teams have worked carefully to plan and prepare during today's training day. We need to balance the virtual school offer with the reality that our staff are working from their homes with care responsibilities for their own families. It will look different for each pathway to reflect our personalised curriculum model which is not 'one size fits all'. There is a second letter from our Vice Principal Rebecca Shaw outlining the Virtual School details. We thank you in advance for your patience as we transition into this model across this week and next week.

The Department for Education are not able to tell us when schools will reopen. They have confirmed again that the safest place for everybody during the pandemic is within the protected home environment. The Department for Education provided additional guidance for special schools on 19<sup>th</sup> April to support risk assessment guidelines. The underlying principle remains that pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans have increased vulnerabilities and also safest at home. Pupils at this special school have complex profiles that require hand-to-hand contact for personal care and support which does not match the 2m social distancing guidelines to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. We will continue with our virtual learning model to protect our school community.

The school has prepared a video and social story to help your child understand that school is now starting but not in the school building. They are on the school website with this letter.

We know members of our school community have experienced loss due to the coronavirus. Please let us know if you are affected so that we can reach out to you with bereavement support.

We wish your family safety and wellbeing during this very uncertain time.

Sincerely,

Vijita Patel  
Principal

Peter Sprinz  
Chair of Governors

Government Website for COVID-19 safety measures: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>