



Coronavirus: Trust Update no. 2

The most recent advice announced by the government has had a significant impact across the Trust, affecting both pupil and staff absence. Although we take our civic duty very seriously, schools have to be adequately staffed and there is a critical point at which it becomes unsafe to remain open for all pupils.

In order to keep the whole community as safe as possible, and for as long as possible, the following measures are being implemented across all schools immediately.

1. Calendar Events and Meetings

Most events and meetings will now be either postponed or cancelled at all schools. This will include parents' evenings. Individual schools will advise parents/carers accordingly. Visiting speakers and theatre groups have also been cancelled.

Post-16 students were due to begin work experience placements shortly, but this activity has now been postponed.

Governance of all schools will continue remotely and all governor visits and meetings have been cancelled for the foreseeable future.

2. School Closures

Partial or full closure of schools is now more likely as staff absences are increasing. We will stay open for as long as possible and, where practical, classes will be combined. However, in the event that staffing levels become unsafe for the schools to remain fully open, we have prioritised student groups as follows:

- Specific Year Groups:
 - Year 6
 - Year 7
 - Year 11
 - Year 13
- Children (in any year group) of:
 - health care professionals
 - emergency workers: 999 services
 - workers producing medical equipment
 - food and distribution workers
 - school staff - teaching and support
 - families in receipt of free school meals

Parents will be given as much notice of closure as possible, but school arrangements may be overtaken by national decisions. Communication of school closure will be in line with the details published on Monday 16th March and the Suffolk County Council school closure list is now operational.

3. Providing Work

All schools in the Trust have communicated how they will aim to provide work during any closure. This will be a combination of printed and online resources. It should be noted that many companies are offering free subscriptions during this period to support schools and learners as much as possible. We will not be able to replicate the “standard” curriculum during any period of closure - either for those in school, or those at home - but staff will do their very best to provide quality work.

If your child needs any particular equipment - pens, pencils, text books, revision books etc in order to work at home, please contact the school in confidence and we will provide whatever we can.

4. Free School Meals

Our catering suppliers are presently exploring a range of options to provide ongoing support for families if schools are forced to close. Further details should be released shortly. In the event of partial closure, learners in receipt of free school meals (in any year group) will be prioritised.

5. Examination Arrangements

Understandably, there will be concerns relating to examination arrangements in particular. Many older students have conditional places in further and higher education and will be expecting to take exams in a matter of weeks. This is a national issue and decisions are likely to be made by the Department for Education in conjunction with Ofqual.

Schools and Trusts are being supported by key organisations such as the Association of School and College Lecturers (ASCL) and the Confederation of School Trusts (CST). These groups are now feeding directly into COBRA meetings, so that the needs of young people are being fully represented. We will update parents and students as soon as decisions are made.

6. Ongoing Support

In the event of school closures, the Trust offices will remain open for as long as possible. Queries and questions can be sent to: enquiries@johnmiltonacademytrust.co.uk (this is a confidential address) and we will endeavour either to respond or to pass issues to the relevant headteacher or to Suffolk County Council.

Alternatively, two phone lines will be available at the Trust’s Central Office:

01449 742422 (Mrs S Stringer)

01449 708487 (Mrs N Hooper)

The Trust will continue to provide safeguarding support to all pupils and families if schools are forced to close. If you have any safeguarding concerns during school closures, please use the email address and numbers above and the matter will be dealt with by a designated safeguarding lead, either for your child’s school, or a Trust officer.

Although school websites will keep parents/carers up to date, updates and other information will also be posted on the Trust’s website: www.johnmiltonacademytrust.co.uk

7. COVID-19: Helplines Available

Various charities are giving advice on specific concerns for those in the community who are living with a disability and/or are more vulnerable to infection:

- Diabetes UK has provided an [updated information page](#) for people living with diabetes;
- Asthma UK has released a [blog post with advice for people with asthma](#);

- The British Heart Foundation has published [guidance for people with health problems](#);
- The National Eczema Society has offered [advice on handwashing techniques](#) for people with eczema and other skin conditions;
- SignHealth has created [British Sign Language \(BSL\) videos](#) to help deaf BSL users either working in charities or receiving support;
- Carers UK has produced [recommendations for carers](#);
- The [Cystic Fibrosis Trust](#), [Primary Immunodeficiency UK](#) and the [Mental Health Foundation](#) have all issued advice and support;
- <https://youngminds.org.uk/> Parents' helpline 0808 802 5544;
- www.samaritans.org.uk Phone: 116 123 (free 24-hour helpline);
- www.sane.org.uk/support Phone 0300 304 7000.

8. Department for Education Coronavirus Helpline

The Department for Education coronavirus helpline is available to answer questions about COVID-19. Staff, parents and young people can contact this helpline as follows:

Phone: 0800 046 8687

Email: DfE.coronavirushelpline@education.gov.uk

Opening hours: 8am to 6pm (Monday to Friday)

Please note that the helpline is reporting a high volume of calls.

Bacton
Primary School

Cedars Park
Primary School

Mendlesham
Primary School

Stowupland
High School

Registered Address: JMAT Centre | Church Road | Stowupland | Stowmarket | IP14 4BQ
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