



## THE KING'S SCHOOL

**The King's School**

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West Yorkshire

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20 March 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

The country is currently in uncharted waters with regard to the coronavirus outbreak. The decision to close the schools, except for children who have parents classified as key workers and the most vulnerable, has been made by the government and we must respond accordingly.

We have been overwhelmed by the messages of support and the way the whole school community has come together over the last few days. Pupils, parents/carers and staff have shown a generosity of spirit in exceptional circumstances. We want to try and provide as much structure for pupils whilst they are not in school and work with you as parents and carers so that your child does not fall behind in their learning.

As mentioned in a previous communication, during this period of closure we will continue to set classwork for all our pupils. As pupils and their families are very familiar with 'Show My Home Work' (SMHW) we intend to use this as the main method of communication and platform for setting all work. Alongside SMHW we will also be using Google Classroom and a number of other online educational software packages. Pupils have usernames and passwords for these and know how to use them. A full week of home learning will be provided every Monday morning on SMHW. We are confident that the vast majority of pupils know how to use all of the virtual platforms, but for your information, you can find instructions and user guides in our Parent/Carer Communication section of our website via the link below:

<https://kings.patrust.org.uk/parent-carer-communication/>

Of course we understand that not all families will have access to the internet or a device so please get in contact with us if this is the case and we will provide support through paper resources.

We also understand that this is a difficult time for families and you may need support from additional agencies and/or need to speak to school about support, there is a section on our website of support agencies which can be found on the link below. Please also find attached guidance from the British Psychological Society.

<https://kings.patrust.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/>

We will continue to communicate regularly with parents/carers as much as we possibly can. You can contact school via the normal channels, please bear with us and understand we are responding to a situation which is constantly evolving:

School telephone: 01977 601701

Email: [Admin@kings.patrust.org.uk](mailto:Admin@kings.patrust.org.uk)

I will also be sending a separate personal letter to our Year 11 pupils reassuring them around their exam outcomes. We will ensure that we provide a positive 'leavers' experience for them in the future as much as we possibly can.

Clearly, we can only respond to government guidance as we receive it and we will do this as quickly as is practical. We appreciate the support that you as a parent/carer have given the school in what has been a challenging few days, and your support and patience means a great deal to me, staff and the wider school community.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D Pinto', written in a cursive style.

**Mr D Pinto**  
**Head of School**

## Guidance from the British Psychological Society

Advice and guidance for parents and carers from The British Psychological Society who have provided a resource paper on the coronavirus and school closures.

- Schools have not 'shut down' – Although most children will not be able to physically attend school you will still be able to communicate with senior leaders or, in some instances, teachers.
- Don't try to replicate a full school timetable – It won't be possible to replicate a full school timetable for a variety of reasons. Giving yourself and your children permission to accept this can be a big weight lifted.
- Expect stress – This is an uncertain and unpredictable situation, stress and anxiety are normal.
- Reassure children – Children can sometimes believe they are responsible for things that are clearly beyond their control. Reassure children that it is the adult's job to make sure things are OK and to keep them safe.
- Help children stay connected to their friends – Friendships are a key resiliency factor for children and young people. Most children see their friends nearly every day of the week and so not being in contact with them for some time might be upsetting. Is it possible for children to talk to their friends on the phone? Perhaps establish a group Skype or WhatsApp call? Perhaps they could write letters to each other.
- Normalise the experience – Normalising the experience is likely to reduce anxiety for many children. Reassure children that lots of adults and other children are in the same situation.
- Have a routine and structure – Having a plan and a predictable routine for the day can be very reassuring. As adults we like to know what is going to happen, and children like this too. A consistent routine lets everyone be secure about the plans for the day. It is often useful to involve children in creating this routine, so that they feel part of the plan, rather than the plan being imposed on them. You could display the routine using a timeline, or maybe pictures and visuals. Encourage children to develop independence by referring to their own routine/plan themselves.
- Don't worry if the routine isn't perfect – Remember, this isn't a normal situation. If you find that planning and sticking to the routine is causing more stress, friction or conflict, then it's OK to be more 'free-flow'. Perhaps be guided by the activities that children want to do.
- Avoid putting too much pressure on academic work – Most parents and carers aren't teachers and so it's OK not to be doing 'school-work' for six hours a day. It might be more important to be spending time together, building relationships, enjoying shared activities and reassuring children, as opposed to replicating the school timetable.
- Try to keep work in one place – If children are doing schoolwork or project work at home, try to keep it all in one place so that it doesn't spread out over the house. This can help to maintain a work/home boundary. We know that people live in different circumstances that might mean this isn't always possible, so perhaps there might be other ways to 'signal' the end of working e.g. putting away the work and then enjoying a favourite song or shared dance!
- Reduce access to rolling news – It is important to keep up to date with new developments and announcements, but it can be hard to switch off from the constant stream of news from media outlets and social media. Reduce the time spent hearing, reading or watching news –at the moment it might be overwhelming for adults and children. Try to protect children from distressing media coverage.
- Supervise children with screens – It is likely that children and young people will be using screens more often over the coming weeks e.g. phones, tablets, gaming consoles and the internet. If this is the case, make sure they are supervised. Ensure appropriate content filters are active – the UK Safer Internet Centre offers guidance on setting up parental control. Try to ensure all children have a balanced range of activities each day. Involve children and young people in these discussions so that they feel part of the plan.
- Provide reassurance about exams being cancelled – Young people may now be concerned about the announcement that exams later this year will not be going ahead as planned. They may feel like all their hard work has been for nothing. Reassure young people that the Prime Minister has said that all children and young people will get the qualification they worked towards but acknowledge that the plan is a bit uncertain right now. Reassure young people that the government and Department for Education are working on a plan.
- Play – Play is fundamental to children's wellbeing and development – children of all ages! It is also a great way to reduce stress in adults.