

20th March 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

Covid-19 Update - School Closure

As you know we are all facing extraordinary challenges at this time and the situation is placing pressure on all parts of society. Our staff have been doing all they can to keep our school open since this crisis began and along with the Wade Deacon Trust and our Local Governing Body, I would like to pay tribute to their remarkable commitment. They have been extraordinary and we will continue to play our part over the coming weeks.

As you may be aware, the Government made several very important decisions on Wednesday 18th March about schools. There will be further details to follow but I wanted to ensure you had as much information as possible as early as possible.

The first is that the Government has advised schools in England to close, except for certain groups of children, from this Friday afternoon (20th March) onwards as a further measure to prevent the spread of COVID-19. No date has been set for when schools will re-open for all students.

From Monday, the school will continue to be open for all the following groups of students;

- Children whose parents are classed as key workers – please use the link below to access the list of key worker roles.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision>
- Those classed as what the Secretary of State described as vulnerable children. These would be those who are young carers, have a social worker and those with EHCPs.

Please be aware the government has asked parents to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and asked schools to remain open only for those children who absolutely need to attend.

The government has stated 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. We are being asked to continue to provide care for a limited number of children.

Please follow these key principles;

1. If it is at all possible for children to be at home, then they should be.
2. If a child needs specialist support, is vulnerable or has a parent who is a critical worker, then educational provision will be available for them.
3. Parents should not rely for childcare upon those who are advised to be in the stringent social distancing category such as grandparents, friends, or family members with underlying conditions.
4. Parents should also do everything they can to ensure children are not mixing socially in a way which can continue to spread the virus. They should observe the same social distancing principles as adults.

For students in these groups, we have also been asked to try to remain open through the Easter holidays and we will do our best to achieve this. From Monday 23rd March and throughout this period our school will provide care for these children. I have already sent a survey out on our Social Media Platforms, MyEd App and on the website, requesting parents/carers declare their occupations. If you have not already done so, please complete the survey today, so my leadership team can assess the level of provision that will be required on Monday.

Survey Link

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=kGSC6rbgAk2BMLvfMAKGDAUy8cTWfxNOjvG3nl8zgmXUM0dRUIY4WTdMRio2UzNRSE0zU0EyMINEUi4u>

I hope you will recognise the difficult times schools and teachers now face. We are called on to provide emergency childcare at a time when many teachers' first thought will be to remain with their families and children. It is essential that we will all pull together to support our emergency services and key workers and you can do this by minimising your call on our limited resources. Therefore, children who do not fall into the groups listed above should remain at home with the appropriate care. There may also be partners who work from home or other non-elderly family members who could provide childcare support. I must stress schools are closed for public health reasons and the provision we are putting in place is an emergency measure only. Please support our staff and each other by respecting the need for key workers to have access to appropriate childcare at this time.

The School Day

The school day will be slightly amended during this period. The school will be open for breakfast from **8.30am** and **close at 2.40pm** for all students attending. Please can I ask that parents and carers pick up promptly so staff can support their own families.

Home Learning

Following the letter distributed on 13th March 2020, I would like to remind you what we have in place to ensure students those students that are not attending school can carry on their learning at home.

Students have been reminded of their Show My Homework Log in details. This will be the main platform that staff will place details of home learning activities for all year groups. Nursery and Reception parents will use Tapestry. Both these applications can be accessed on laptops, tablets and mobile phones. We are also providing packs of work for students to support those preparing for external exams and also year groups where this is possible.

Primary Phase:

- Primary students also have log in details for TT Rockstars and Numbots; Year 5 and 6 have been issued with log in details for Hegarty Maths.
- Primary staff have ensured that students will have access to a basic pack of key words, key number facts, key handwriting and key reading materials. These are the activities that students need to learn, reinforce and practice regularly until they are fluent. Staff are putting together a list of activities each year group can do with these materials
- We will also provide some project type tasks that will allow students to demonstrate and finalise learning on topics that have been taught and will also prepare them for topics in the future. These may be creative and allow each student to demonstrate their learning at their level in the topics/subjects they have studied. Details will be on Show My Homework.
- All Primary classes have CGP Homework or revision books and these will also be used to support learning. Year 2 and 6 students will be supported to prepare for their SATs as will Year 1 students who need to keep learning their phonic sounds.
- Each Key Stage has an e-mail account linked to their Key Stage teachers. The information on these addresses can be found on the website at www.thegrangeacademy.co.uk under Pupils, Email Access.

Secondary Phase:

Secondary Departments have an e-mail account linked to their department teachers. The information on how students can access their school e-mail accounts can be found on our website at www.thegrangeacademy.co.uk under Pupils, Email Access. A list of the departmental e-mails can also be found on this area of the website.

- In addition to Show My Homework, Secondary students also have login details for Hegarty Maths and many are already accessing Seneca as part of their learning.
- All secondary students have been given packs of work to complete during this time. The department e-mail addresses can be used to ask for guidance and feedback from staff members. Many students already have revision guides which they should continue to use.
- We will provide some project type tasks that will allow students to consolidate their learning on topics that have been taught and will also prepare them for topics in the future. These may be creative and allow each student to demonstrate their learning at their level in the topics/subjects they have studied. Details will be on Show My Homework.
- BBC Bitesize can be used by all year groups.

Staff will endeavour to provide feedback and reply to students through the faculty e-mails, however, please be mindful this may not be possible due to staff feeling unwell, or looking after sick relatives also. Staff will not be expected to respond to these e-mails during the scheduled Easter break. Therefore, from **3pm on Friday 3rd April until 8am on Monday 20th April**, staff will not be expected to reply to e-mails from students.

Safeguarding and Child Protection

In terms of safeguarding we are continuing to monitor the safety and welfare of our students. Should you have any concerns during the period of closure you should e-mail Safeguarding@thegrangeacademy.co.uk.

This account will be monitored regularly during the closure period. Please note staff will not be expected to respond to these e-mails during the scheduled Easter break.

Should you have concerns during the Easter break then you can e-mail the school but we would also advise you to contact the Local Authority ICART on 0303 333 4300 from 9am – 5pm. For any concerns outside these time please contact Social Care Emergency Duty Team on 0345 050 0148.

Further safeguarding information is available on the website using the link below;
<https://www.thegrangeacademy.co.uk/parents/safeguarding/>

Free Schools Meals and Food Provision

As you are aware, we are part of the magic breakfast programme who provide bagels and cereal for all our students. This will continue for **ALL STUDENTS** that are part of The Grange Academy, unless they are self-isolating, so they can continue to have a meal at the start of the day. This will run from **8.30am until 9.30am**.

Please note this provision may change as time passes and I will keep you updated.

Those students who receive a free school meal will be able to collect this from the school between **11.00am and 1.00pm**. This is available to **ALL STUDENTS** entitled to a free school meal. If they are self-isolating, a parent or carer could collect it from the school between these times. This will be in the form of a packed lunch.

Those students who may be in school and are not entitled to a free school meal will be provided with a meal as normal.

We have also been in touch with the Local Food Banks who have provided us with information about how they can be accessed during this time. This information can be found using the link below;

<https://www.thegrangeacademy.co.uk/parents/coronavirus-guidance/>

Examinations and National Tests

The second key Government announcement is that tests and exams will not take place this summer. For children and young people who have worked so hard to prepare for their SATs, GCSEs or A-levels this may be upsetting, and we sympathise with them. At the same time we understand the decision the Government has made and we are reassured that children's grades in GCSEs and A-levels will be awarded on the basis of moderated assessment, in conjunction with the exam boards and Ofqual. This means that the hard work students have done will be rewarded. It may not feel quite the same, and nor is it, but they will receive grades that will progress them to the next stage of their lives.

The school careers adviser, Mrs Conlon, will still be available throughout the duration of the closure by telephone or email to advise students and parents. She can be contacted at 0151 511 7464 or email jane.conlon@halton.gov.uk.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind you that our website and our social media accounts will be used as the official method of communication during the period of closure to ensure reliable and clear communication from the school.

Website: www.thegrangeacademy.co.uk

Twitter: [@Grange_School](https://twitter.com/Grange_School)

Instagram: @thegrangeacademy

Facebook: @grangeacademy

Finally, I would once again like to take this opportunity to thank you wholeheartedly for your understanding and ongoing support in helping us to manage this unprecedented situation.

Yours faithfully,



Mr Ian Critchley
Principal