

19 March 2020

Dear parent/carer,

URGENT: School closure owing to Coronavirus

Dear Parent/Carer,

Following on from my last update, I'm now writing to let you know that **we have now been instructed to close the school to almost all children after this Friday until further notice.**

Please read all of this letter as it contains important information about our future plans.

Children who can still attend school

As advised by the government, we will do all we can to stay open for the children of key workers (e.g. NHS staff, police, others in frontline services) and children with certain needs.

We are waiting for the government to publish more information on what this means but the latest advice includes the following examples:

- Children of key workers, such as NHS staff, police and supermarket delivery drivers, who need to be able to go to work to support the country's fight to tackle coronavirus.
- Vulnerable children who have a social worker.
- Children who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

Please note that this list may expand, as we receive further guidance. We will update you as soon as we have this.

The government has also asked schools to be open during the Easter holiday. Once we know how many students need this service, we can assess whether this is possible.

We need to make plans for the level of service to provide in the coming weeks, so please let us know if you will be sending your child to school.

If you think your child falls into one of the above categories please email:

attendance@silverdale-chorustrust.org or, if you can't access email, call the school on 0114 236 9991 and choose the option for reporting attendance/absence. Please provide the following information:

- Your child's name and class.
- The reason for them attending school, e.g. if you are key worker (please provide your job title); child has social worker; child has EHCP, etc.
- Whether you need this service during the Easter holiday.

We will then send you further information before the end of the week about arrangements for next week.

Chorus Education Trust CEO: Chris James



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Arrangements for the rest of this week

Attendance

We are still responsible for the safety of all our students, so if you are not sending your child in this week please inform us as usual via the absence email: absence@silverdale-chorustrust.org or phoning school on 0114 236 9991 and choosing the absence option.

We will continue to monitor student and staff levels and will inform you if we have to shut to certain year groups.

On Friday school will end at the normal time.

Support for students in school

We will be talking to students in school today and tomorrow, reassuring them about how we will still be supporting them during the closure.

What we will do during the closure

Support for students receiving Free School Meals

The government has said:

“To support children eligible for free school meals, schools will be able to purchase meals or vouchers for supermarkets or local shops.

The government has also confirmed that the total value of vouchers offered to each eligible child per week will exceed the rate it pays to schools for free school meals, recognising that families will not be buying food in bulk and may therefore incur higher costs. The final amounts will be confirmed shortly.

Effective immediately, schools will be able to order vouchers directly from supermarkets or shops in their communities to be emailed or printed and posted to families, and they will have their costs covered by the Department for Education. Guidance for schools will be published shortly.”

We will update you with further information about these arrangements as soon as we have them.

Exams cancelled for this summer

The government have announced that there will be no exams this summer for GCSE, A-level, etc. There is no further advice yet about what this means in practice but we will share it as soon as we receive it.

Whilst this does remove the immediate pressure of finishing course work and revising for exams, it is important that students do not give up on their studies. They will still need to be prepared for the next stage of their education. Therefore, we are providing remote learning resources (further information is below).

I know that our students have been working hard towards these exams and that they may feel a mixture of relief but also disappointment. It is a very odd situation and it may feel confusing for them.

Remote Learning

Our teachers will be setting remote learning for all students. This will be communicated in the usual way via our Milk homework app. You can find further information about this on our website at:

<https://www.silverdale-chorustrust.org/remotelearning>

We realise that home learning creates pressures for you at home and, in due course, we will provide you with advice and tips about how best to manage this responsibility. We are all adapting to this new situation, but we are determined to support you throughout it.

In the meantime, if you are concerned that you or your child does not have access to Milk, please contact IT via email: itsupport@silverdale-chorustrust.org

Student welfare

The welfare of our students is vital during this closure period. Below is some initial information about what we plan to do to support them

Pastoral support

As usual, our pastoral teams should be the first point of contact, for non-teaching related queries. They will be able to direct you to the best person, if they can't resolve the issue for you.

Year 7: y7pastoralsupport@silverdale-chorustrust.org

Years 8 & 9: ks3pastoralsupport@silverdale-chorustrust.org

Years 10 & 11: ks4pastoralsupport@silverdale-chorustrust.org

Sixth Form: sixthform@silverdale-chorustrust.org

Protecting students online

If students are at home and spending more time online, please do ensure that they stay safe. There are some great resources at: <https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-centre/young-people/resources-11-19s>

But it's also worth talking to them about this and checking in regularly about what they are doing online.

How will school keep track of vulnerable students?

Our safeguarding team will be checking on vulnerable students throughout the closure.

Who should I contact if I have concerns about a student?

If you have a safeguarding concern please contact our safeguarding team on one of these numbers:

07401 977802 or 07490 417698

What we won't be doing during the closure

Unfortunately, owing to the closure, **all school events have been cancelled**. This includes any revision sessions scheduled during the Easter break.

Staying in touch with you

We use the Weduc communications app to send in-app messages and emails to parents. If you do not receive messages in this way please contact IT to ensure we have your contact details or to help you enrol in this service at: itsupport@silverdale-chorustrust.org

All the information we send to you will also be posted on our website at: <https://www.silverdale-chorustrust.org/>

We will soon be changing our website to make it easier to see all the information you need during this closure. Please bear with us whilst we make these changes.

I hope that covers all immediate questions. As I have said, we will update you once we receive more information from the government.

And remember: if you or your child feels ill and you want to know what to do next, please use NHS 111 online at: <https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19>

Thank you again for your continued support.

Wishing you and your family the very best,

Mrs Sarah Sims
Head of Silverdale School