

INFORMATION LETTER FROM THE NOVA EDUCATION TRUST

Dear Parents & Carers,

These are the most extraordinary times we are living through for many generations. Our schools will be closing on Friday 20th March 2020 but we will be responding positively to the government's request to keep our doors open to learners who are in a vulnerable position and those of key workers. At Nova we have been working very hard to ensure that we can best support all learners and their families through this crisis. Nova would wish to express its gratitude and thanks to all our parents, carers, learners and staff for the fortitude and support they have shown to date. At such a time it is important that we pull together as much as we can and maintain a strong line of communication between each of our schools and their families. Our aim is to minimise the level of anxiety associated with this event and provide every support to our communities. Please be reassured that as soon as we know anything of importance, we will let you know. The Trust and our schools will aim to make contact with every family on a weekly basis. Detailed information will be available on every school website. If you do not have access to the internet please let your school know and they will provide information in other ways.

Continuity of Service

With predictions stretching into the long term it is essential that our learners remain in a 'learning' mode. This week all of our staff have been training to operate our remote learning systems. These systems will vary from school to school, but hopefully the end service is consistent. During normal school teaching days staff will be setting work, posting it on-line and it is our expectation that every learner will engage with the learning, including the set exercises. Staff will continue to assess the work that has been set. It is vital that every learner uses their time to develop their own learning, with the help of their school and family. We will be providing suggestions as to activities learners and their families can make the following weeks as constructive as possible. We do not want our learners to fall behind in their learning. Learners who have been in school this last week before closure, will have been taught how to navigate these on-line learning systems. For those learners who have not been able to attend school there will be on-line tutorials. It is vital that parents & carers encourage their children to engage with this learning during every school day. For many schools learning will be provided via their websites. For many of our primary schools learning will be provided via 'learning packs'.

Key Workers

The government has indicated that they wish for schools to remain open for vulnerable children and those learners whose parents/carers are designated as key workers. Schools will have posted the list of key workers that the government has defined on their website.

For those learners who attend suitable learning work will be provided, in line with that which would normally be set. For those learners attending school, the normal rules will apply regarding day to day actions. Our motto is 'Work Hard; Be Kind' and we will expect this from all attendees.

Easter Holiday provision

The government has requested that schools provide the above service during the 2 week Easter recess. As a public service we will of course respond positively to this request. At this moment in time our plans are still being constructed as to how this will operate, but as soon as we know you will know.

Public Examinations

The government has said that all key assessments for Summer 2020 (SATs, GCSEs / BTEC & A-Levels/BTEC) will not take place. We know this will be heart-breaking news for our learners and their families. The vast majority of learners have been working so hard to succeed in these critical assessments and for the assessments to be lost at the last moment is difficult to accept. We hope that the government ensures whatever grades will be awarded are as fair as they can possibly be to all learners who are affected by this suspension. Once again, we will inform all concerned how the government intends to proceed in this matter, once we have further information.

School Meal Vouchers

School meals are an important provision for many families, especially for those who are eligible for free school meals. In line with the government's policy we will be working hard with the authorities concerned to administer and issue these vouchers. Details, when known, will be posted upon our school websites. We appreciate that some families may soon become entitled to free school meals because of changed economic circumstances as a result of COVID-19. Once again we will provide information to families via our school websites as to how to apply for these vouchers.

Fortunately, our young people are not at high risk from the coronavirus but it is important that they follow government advice regarding personal hygiene, social distancing, self-isolation if they or their families contract the virus and avoid elderly relatives or family friends (the over 70s). Please help us by reinforcing these actions for as long as the infection period lasts.

Useful Information Links for Parents

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19>

In the meantime it is important that our learners have the opportunity to play and exercise. A healthy body is one of the best defences in this instance. At Nova we wish every family good health over this trying period of time. Take care.

Yours sincerely,

John Tomasevic
(CEO Nova Education Trust)