



Whitefield

Academy Trust

18th March 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

I am writing to let you know that the whole academy, Whitefield Schools, Joseph Clarke School and Project Search will be closed from the end of the day on Thursday 19th March until further notice due to the continuing impact of the Coronavirus.

Following my letter on 16th March senior leaders and directors of the Whitefield Academy Trust have continued to keep the coronavirus situation under review, giving further consideration as to how we can reduce the risk to our students and staff. The safety and wellbeing of our school community remains paramount.

I have reached the very difficult decision to close in the light of two significant risks:

- Staff absence has increased due to national guidance on self-isolation. As the level of staff absence grows there is a risk that classes will not have sufficient familiar staff to keep them safe and continue learning.
- The school's context means that we are unable to avoid close contact with our students. Our staff maintain close physical contact to support learning, to help students move around the school, to support positive behaviour and to help with personal hygiene. This makes it more likely that the virus will spread, putting students and staff at risk.

I have kept public health and the local authority informed and they are aware of our decision to close.

I know how difficult this decision will be for you and understand the impact it may have on you and your family.

We will contact you in the next week with advice and resources for supporting home learning.

We have set up new phone lines for parents to contact the Family Support team with any information or queries. From Monday 23rd March you can ring Gill Wadeson on 07871 735358 or Lesley Middleton on 07871 780023 for Whitefield School parents or Sarah Bent on 07871 778470 or Angela Norris on 07851 961892 for Joseph Clarke School parents between 9am and 12noon, or leave a message or text at any time and we will get back to you by the following day. We will make every effort to help you continue to educate your child at home.

I assure you that I will continue to monitor the situation closely so that we can re-open as soon as possible. Information on the school website will be updated regularly. I look forward to being able to welcome the students and staff back to school.

Yours sincerely,

Elaine Colquhoun OBE
Chief Executive Officer
Whitefield Academy Trust