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Executive Principal Dr Hilary Macaulay

19th March 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

IMPORTANT : Closure of SKA for all year groups from Monday 23rd March 2020

I am writing to confirm that, following the announcement by the Prime Minister yesterday evening in response to the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic, **I am closing the Academy to students from Monday 23rd March 2020**. We must assume that the Academy will remain closed for the foreseeable future and we have no idea when we will be told that schools in England can fully reopen. The situation, like the virus itself, has moved very quickly as I am sure everyone appreciates.

You will also be aware that the Prime Minister has confirmed that no public examinations e.g. GCSEs or BTECs will go ahead this summer but that students will not be disadvantaged for the hard work they have put into preparing for them over several years and will be awarded qualifications. We are awaiting clarification on the position regarding the IBCP post-16 examinations from the IBO. We will have more details about all aspects relating to public examinations in due course and will of course let you know.

We will contact you via our Parent Email system to tell you of any changes in the situation or new information we may receive and, as I have said before and as you are aware, we have been planning our response to this situation for several weeks and have made appropriate arrangements to ensure as much continuity in education as possible for our students.

All students have been briefed on our Continuity of Education Strategy and how to access their work and return it and I have also communicated this to all parents/carers so that everyone has this information. Our staff are incredibly innovative and responsive to the needs of our students and I know that the format for remote learning will develop further as time goes on during this period of closure.

As you are aware, the Academy closed to students in Years 7-9 from Thursday 19th March. Like them, if your child is in receipt of Free School Meals, we have initially arranged for them to collect vouchers at the end of the day on Friday for the remaining two weeks up to what would have been our normal end of term. The Government have informed us that they will make arrangements for similar provision of the time after Easter and we will be able to let parents/carers of eligible students know as soon as we can confirm details.

Please also be aware of important government guidance on 'social distancing'. This is an unprecedented situation we are in affecting almost the whole world and we all have our part to play in helping to bring it under control. Although students are not required to be in the Academy, they must remain at home or in the care of responsible adults completing set work during term time. Students are not permitted to be out in public places unsupervised during what would be the school day. Please also note that there are some groups of people who are at increased risk from coronavirus. These include people aged 70 and over, pregnant women and people of all ages with the underlying health conditions listed by the government on this web-page:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-social-distancing-and-for-vulnerable-people>

It is vitally important that whilst your child is at home, they avoid mixing with anyone in these categories.

If you are a Key Worker, as deemed by the Government's Cabinet Office, and you need us to continue to educate your child on site in order that you can go to work, we will be sending a Key Worker specific form out this morning which you can return so that we can ascertain which service you work for in line with the Government's list. Please return this form to info@skinerskentacademy.org.uk by **10am on Friday 20th March** so that we can liaise with you regarding details of the provision. This email account will also be checked between the hours of 8.15am and 3.15pm during the week whilst the Academy remains closed.

We are acutely conscious of the impact on students and families of school closure. However, I have a duty to follow instructions from the government and Public Health England in order to keep everybody safe and healthy. Our Academy community is extremely special and it is a huge privilege to lead it. As I said in our 2019 edition of Equus, the SKA annual magazine, '*In tranquillo esse quisque gubernator potest*' (Anyone can hold the helm when the sea is calm), Publilius Syrus. Now is the test for us all to steer through these turbulent unknown waters and to anyone affected more generally, either by their own health, that of their loved ones, or by their financial security as a result of this unprecedented global event, I send my and the Academy's very warmest support.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Hilary Macaulay
Executive Principal