

Dear Parents/Carers,

RE: Confirmed closure of Didsbury High School

Firstly, can I thank the whole parent community at this difficult time for the unwavering support you have given. As you may be aware, we have now received guidance from HM Government that we are advised to close school with effect from 3.45pm today, Friday 20th March. The school site will be closed until further notice, with the exception of students in the following two categories:

1. Identified students with certain needs and
2. Children of key workers, see the attached appendix.

If it is at all possible for your child to be at home, then they should be. We have asked parents/carers who may fall into the 'key workers' categories and have no alternative means of childcare to enable them to work, to contact us in a separate communication. We will also send further details regarding the onsite care arrangements during normal school hours for next week and beyond.

All other students will need to stay at home so we ask that you do not send your child into school from Monday onwards. This is a notable development as it further highlights the important role we all have in helping to reduce the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19). Parents/carers should do everything they can to ensure children are not mixing socially in a way which can continue to spread the virus.

Free School Meals

We are making arrangements to provide parents/carers with children eligible for free school meals with Tesco vouchers during the period of closure. These will be emailed out to each family early next week.

What we will continue to do whilst students are at home

In recent weeks, staff have been working hard to prepare for this situation. Yesterday all students were given an envelope packed full of work to keep them busy for the next two weeks until the Easter break. In addition, we signposted the online learning platforms, that they already use as part of our curriculum, for them to continue to access.

If the school remains closed for a longer period of time, as is likely, we will be in touch regarding other methods of remote learning that your child will have access to. We are working towards using an online system to interact with our students. To access this they will need an internet enabled device like a laptop, tablet, computer or smart phone. We will also be ensuring we continue our pastoral care during this period.

The school will be open with a skeleton team of staff, please continue to use the usual channels to contact us either by telephone or by emailing enquiries@didsburyhighschool.org.uk. If you have any questions regarding the work and activities we have set or other concerns please do not hesitate to get in touch. Please also monitor our communications via the website and social media.

I would like to express my appreciation for your support and understanding shown during this time as we focus on protecting the health and wellbeing of all our students, staff and communities.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Walley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "D" and a long, horizontal flourish at the end.

Head of School

Key Worker Categories

Health and social care

This includes but is not limited to doctors, nurses, midwives, paramedics, social workers, care workers, and other frontline health and social care staff including volunteers; the support and specialist staff required to maintain the UK's health and social care sector; those working as part of the health and social care supply chain, including producers and distributors of medicines and medical and personal protective equipment.

Education and childcare

This includes nursery and teaching staff, social workers and those specialist education professionals who must remain active during the COVID-19 response to deliver this approach.

Key public services

This includes those essential to the running of the justice system, religious staff, charities and workers delivering key frontline services, those responsible for the management of the deceased, and journalists and broadcasters who are providing public service broadcasting.

Local and national government

This only includes those administrative occupations essential to the effective delivery of the COVID-19 response or delivering essential public services such as the payment of benefits, including in government agencies and arms length bodies.

Food and other necessary goods

This includes those involved in food production, processing, distribution, sale and delivery as well as those essential to the provision of other key goods (for example hygienic and veterinary medicines).

Public safety and national security

This includes police and support staff, Ministry of Defence civilians, contractor and armed forces personnel (those critical to the delivery of key defence and national security outputs and essential to the response to the COVID-19 pandemic), fire and rescue service employees (including support staff), National Crime Agency staff, those maintaining border security, prison and probation staff and other national security roles, including those overseas.

Transport

This includes those who will keep the air, water, road and rail passenger and freight transport modes operating during the COVID-19 response, including those working on transport systems through which supply chains pass.

Utilities, communication and financial services

This includes staff needed for essential financial services provision (including but not limited to workers in banks, building societies and financial market infrastructure), the oil, gas, electricity and water sectors (including sewerage), information technology and data infrastructure sector and primary industry supplies to continue during the COVID-19 response, as well as key staff working in the civil nuclear, chemicals, telecommunications (including but not limited to network operations, field engineering, call centre staff, IT and data infrastructure, 999 and 111 critical services), postal services and delivery, payments providers and waste disposal sectors.