



Samuel Cody Specialist Sports College

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Covid-19 Update – 5th January 2021

Dear Parents/Carers

I am hoping that by the time you read this, someone will have contacted you, or attempted to contact you and left a message, following the Prime Ministers address to us all last evening and our plans for the next six weeks.

I know that many of you understand what a difficult job it has been for school leaders to keep up with the latest guidance, and last night's late announcement was no different.

Special Schools have been granted flexibility within the Contingency Framework with which to manage student numbers in school pending actioning a mass Covid-19 testing regime. There are several aspects of this expectation which are almost impossible to manage given the needs of our students, but we are charged with keeping students and staff as safe as possible during this awful pandemic. To this end we have planned a temporary school attendance model for our students that includes the most vulnerable and those who have at least one parent who is a critical worker.

At present, we are sadly not able to have every student back in school. Some staff are having to self-isolate and others have been told to shield. This has left us with a reduced staffing capacity. Many of our students have underlying medical needs or live with others who do, and so through the telephone calls that have been made today, we have been able to risk assess who is best placed in school at this time. For those of you who have asked to keep your children at home, I can confirm that a leave of absence will be granted up to and including the 13th February or when guidance changes.

Our aim is to have as few opportunities as possible for the mixing of groups. Those students in school from tomorrow will be in a smaller tutor group which may not be their usual one, but they will follow the timetable for their year group to give them some consistency. Those students on home-learning packages will have access to weekly virtual tutor group catch-ups, and daily Sam Learning. Examination students in KS4 will have the additional opportunity for live on-line learning sessions as well as video lessons and Sam Learning. It is important that our YR11's carry on with as much educational engagement as possible to enable us to give accurate predictions in a non-exam situation later in the year. More guidance on examinations is expected in the next few weeks and we will communicate it with you when it arrives.

I am hoping that we can carry on with this temporary arrangement without the need to restrict access to the school any further due to positive cases amongst staff and students attending. Only by limiting contact can this be achieved.

It is imperative that students who are exhibiting Covid-19 symptoms are kept at home and tested. The result needs to be reported to school as soon as possible. Please use the admin email address at the top of this letter. Please also use the admin email address to notify us of any student who is expected in school but who will not be attending.

I am aware that many of our students who will be accessing learning from home qualify for Free School Meals. I am expecting an announcement and guidance regarding this in the next few days and will be able to clarify the arrangements hopefully next week.

Finally, I would like to thank you for your understanding and support. Nobody wants the situation to be as it is, but by helping each other I am hopeful that we will be safe.

Our thoughts are with those of you who are self-isolating and shielding. We hope you stay well. For those of you who are working to keep our local services running please take care of yourselves.

I will keep you updated when the guidance changes and we are able to safely widen our in-school provision.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shani Chinnappa', written in a cursive style.

Mrs S Chinnappa
Headteacher
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