



High Tunstall College of Science

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Headteacher: Mark R Tilling

Deputy Headteachers: Peter W Hayward and Laura Ovens

March 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

Following the announcement by the Secretary of State for Education, I am writing to you about our plans and contingencies we have put in place during the period the college will be partially closed due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19).

As advised by the government, we will do all we can to stay open for the children of key workers in the following economic sectors:

- Health and Social Care Sector
- Education
- Public Service
- Local and National Government
- Food and other necessary goods
- Public Safety and national security
- Transport
- Utilities, communications and financial services

Many of you working in these sectors may be able to ensure your children are kept at home, and the guidance is that those who can safely be cared for at home should be. Please be minded that:

1. If it is possible for children to be at home, then they should be.
2. If a child needs specialist support, is vulnerable or has a parent who is a critical worker, then educational provision will be available for them.
3. Parents should not rely for childcare upon those who are advised to be in the stringent social distancing category such as grandparents, friends, or family members with underlying conditions.
4. Parents should also do everything they can to ensure children are not mixing socially in a way which can continue to spread the virus. They should observe the same social distancing principles as adults.
5. Residential special schools, boarding schools and special settings continue to care for children wherever possible.

If you require our support for child care we ask you to keep the requirements of us as to a minimum so social distancing principles can be maintained.

We will be open to all students (**Years 7 – 11**) who meet these criteria to attend College from Monday and engage in the educational activities on offer if you cannot keep your child safe at home. If your child meets the criteria and we do not see them, we will be in contact on Monday to understand the reason for their absence and to discover what support, if any you would like. **College uniform is not required until we reopen full time.**

All other children will need to stay at home, so we ask that you do not send your child into school from Monday onwards.

Please note that this is a national closure – as you may have heard in the news – so while it is a challenging situation, we are not alone. We will re-open fully as soon as we can and will let you know when this is by all available communication methods, i.e. social media, e-mail and text. The College will be staffed every day (8am – 5pm) so if you have any concerns or need support in any way make contact with us on the College number, 01429 261446, we are here to help and support as much as we can.

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What we'll continue doing while your son/daughter is at home

Your son/daughter's learning is of course important to us, so we want to continue to support them over the coming weeks. We have prepared work for your son/daughter and have excellent ICT systems in place and will be using Microsoft Teams to be able to continue to educate students on a daily basis. Microsoft Teams is a cloud-based drive where we can share resources, replicate classes, distribute work, grade and send feedback.

We have introduced our new learning platform Century Tec (<https://www.century.tech/>) where students are able to access English, Maths and Science content and work that is at the appropriate level for them. We will continue to further prepare these resources and will send out more information over the course of the closure. You will receive a series of 8 emails from us with the work attached for each subject for your son/daughter during the next few days.

We expect every student to complete 1 hour of Science, 1 hour of Mathematics and 1 hour of English via Century Tech a day so that they maintain their learning and will be happy to support you if required. Teachers will be monitoring the usage and make contact if we believe the usage is not enough. Together we cannot afford for the young people to fall behind and will appreciate your full support and cooperation. If you do not have access to ICT at home, we have provided your son/daughter with appropriate work and expect its completion. We will forward more over the coming weeks to keep them going. Learning is for life and we want to support all of our students now and in the future and we need all to be ready to return when the College reopens.

We have asked tutors to ensure that they have all students email addresses and keep in contact with students via their school email accounts. If your son/daughter does use their email account, you will receive a call during the closure to see how things are and how your son/daughter is doing.

If your son/daughter usually receives free school meals, we will be able to provide them with a packed lunch every day which can be collected from the College every day from 12pm. If you are unable to collect, or do not make contact in regards to the free school meal we will make contact with you to find out how you would like us to support you. Hartlepool Borough Council and we have decided not to use the Government voucher scheme at this stage, as we do not have enough information. I understand that this is a difficult time for us all and I would like to assure you that will do everything we can to support your son/daughter during the closure of the college. We will have staff in college 8am – 5pm every day to help and support you and I ask that if you are experiencing any problems/issues or have any concerns that you ring and we will support if we can.

We are particularly sad to be losing Year 11 at this time. They have worked so hard to prepare for the GCSE's and we really do not yet have the detail, or understanding on how GCSE's will be graded. All I can promise is what we said before, we will not allow any of our young people to be disadvantaged by what is happening. We have put together a help sheet on mental health which will be sent to you and is on our website. We will also be sending you a list of useful websites to use for additional learning, we hope that you will make use of them.

At this difficult time, we have heard a lot about social isolation and social distancing and I would like to remind you that it is the responsibility of all to ensure that our young people follow the advice and guidance given. We know that social distancing is about making sure we stem and slow down the spread of this virus and we all need to do our bit. It is not acceptable for groups of young people to congregate in public or at parties during this closure. We will continue to keep you up dated on any further developments via the college website, the parent app and social media.

Best wishes and I look forward to seeing all students on their return to college.

Yours faithfully

Mr M Tilling
Headteacher