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Monday 4th January 2021

Dear Parents/ Carers

School Closure Tuesday January 5th 2021

Like you, I watched the prime minister make the announcement this evening that school must close to almost all pupils with immediate effect. Unfortunately, the government has not provided any additional information to schools as of now, so I have only the information given in the broadcast to work with. This in itself provides some very pressing challenges for the next 24 hours. It also means that I may not be able to answer questions that you have at the moment. However, I will share further information with you as soon as I have it and am able to do so.

Tomorrow, school will be open for children of critical workers who need care tomorrow only. This will include WOOSH before and after school- even if you have not booked it but now need it. If you are a critical worker but do not need the care tomorrow, I must ask you not to send your child to school, in order that school staff have the maximum capacity to complete the preparations for the move to remote learning, so that it is in place for Wednesday.

If your child is attending school tomorrow, their hours, gates etc will be the same as they were today.

We will also use tomorrow to assess care needs across the week, and to have individual conversations with parents of vulnerable pupils to plan their attendance from Wednesday, so that robust plans can be put in place going forward. Remote learning will be available for all pupils from Wednesday. I hope also to have answers about arrangements for free school meal pupils who are not in school by the end of tomorrow, and will confirm arrangements for peripatetic music lessons by the end of the week.

As well as this letter, you should receive an individual letter with your child's login details for Microsoft Teams, which is the software the whole school will use for online face to face class meetings each day. This is a new way of working for all staff as well as pupils, so please bear with us while we all get to grips with it- as they say, theory is good but practice makes perfect!

I am confident that, while this week is going to be very challenging, we can soon settle into the new arrangements. With a concerted national effort, I very much hope that this will be a relatively short period of closure. Westgate is here to support you and your family as much as we are able. The coming weeks are likely to be difficult for families, but we will come through this together, as Westgate always does. Thank you for your support, patience and understanding.

Yours sincerely

Helen Carpenter
Head teacher