

St Wilfrid's Catholic School

St Wilfrid's Way, Old Horsham Road, Crawley, West Sussex RH11 8PG
Tel: 01293 421421 Fax: 01293 421429 Email: office@stwilfrids.com
www.stwilfrids.com  [@stwilfridschool](https://twitter.com/stwilfridschool)



Headteacher: Michael Ferry BEd (Hons) MA NPQH

Diocese of Arundel & Brighton and West Sussex County Council

13 March 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

Corona Virus – Covid-19

As you will undoubtedly be aware, the government have stated that schools are to remain open although they will keep this decision under review. It is estimated that the impact of the virus will reach its peak in approximately 10-14 weeks' time so it is quite possible that any decisions made by the government now (not just regarding schools) may change during this time period.

I am writing now to assure you that all staff are working tirelessly to ensure that your son/daughter continue to receive the very best education possible. As such, apart from an increased emphasis on promoting good personal hygiene, it remains "business as usual" at St Wilfrid's including extracurricular activities.

I, along with other colleague Headteachers across the country, am receiving daily updates from Public Health England and continue to follow their advice as I have done since the beginning of the outbreak. As and when this advice changes I will adapt our protocols in school and inform you of any specific changes/requirements as necessary.

Regarding the issue of "school closures" there are currently three main reasons why the school may close, those being:

1. Government decide to close schools, either regionally or nationally.
2. Upon confirmation that a member of the school community has contracted the virus. Should this occur, I would work closely with Public Health England and follow their advice which may be to close the school so that a "deep clean" could be conducted. Should this be necessary we would close for as short a time as possible, however I would estimate this at around 5 days.
3. A reduction in teaching staffing levels due to illness/emergence of virus like symptoms (ie. continuous dry cough/temperature above 37.8°) may force me to consider a partial closure/full closure of the school. The reality of this is that due to cutbacks in staff over the last few years there is very little "room to manoeuvre" with regard to covering absent colleagues.

Despite our determination to "Keep Calm & Carry On" for as long as possible, it is essential that we adopt a pragmatic approach. If we are required to close, work will be set for students using "Show My Homework" as the vehicle for this. Students in Year 11 and Year 13 will be prioritised and staff will be able to be contacted via email. Should this scenario become necessary, more information will be made available at that time.

What is likely is that the national picture will change over time and although I cannot predict the future, please be assured that we are doing everything we can to mitigate against the possibilities I have identified. I am in regular contact with other Crawley Secondary school Headteachers who are all facing the same challenges and although we will make decisions regarding our own individual schools, there is a strong supportive network which is essential in these uncertain times.

Finally, please do not be alarmed by what you may read/hear in the media regarding the impact of the virus on schools. Much of what is in the public domain is highly speculative, with some headlines bordering on the hysterical. As I have previously mentioned, I will continue to follow the advice of Public Health England and will inform you as necessary as the situation develops.

As always, thank you for your continuous support.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Ferry', with a stylized flourish underneath.

Michael Ferry
Headteacher