



The Bishop Konstant Catholic Academy Trust

Learning Communities, Inspired by Faith

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Dear Parents/Carers,

I hope that this letter finds you and your family well and that you are coping as best you can.

SCHOOL CLOSURE UPDATE

Next week, week commencing 4 May, all schools in the Bishop Konstant Catholic Academy Trust will remain open in order to continue to support parents and carers who work in the NHS or other areas of critical work, and also to support our most vulnerable children. **Please note that all schools will remain open on Bank Holiday, Friday 8 May.**

All Headteachers, school staff and the Trust Central Team have responded overwhelmingly positively over the last few weeks to the additional pressures of keeping schools open, supporting those pupils in school and planning distance learning for those pupils at home. At the same time, many staff have needed to self-isolate, 'shield' or have become ill themselves, which has increased the workload of those colleagues who have been in schools. I would like to express my sincere thanks to the Headteachers and all staff across the Trust for all they are doing during this difficult time.

HOME LEARNING

All schools continue to work to provide the very best resources to support home learning. The Government has produced some guidance aimed at helping parents and carers who are home schooling:

Guidance on helping children aged 2 to 4 learn at home can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/help-children-aged-2-to-4-to-learn-at-home-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

Guidance on helping primary school aged children learn at home can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/help-primary-school-children-continue-their-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

Guidance on helping children with special educational needs and disabilities learn at home can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/help-children-with-send-continue-their-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

I would like to thank you all for the support you are providing at home in working with your children. Our stance on home learning is that pupil and family wellbeing comes first. Remember that your child's teachers and form tutors are available each day to provide any assistance and support you may need.

HOME LEARNING SURVEY

We are keen to gather the thoughts of parents and carers about home learning and what would help to make it better. Today we have issued a survey for parents/carers to complete. Please take a few minutes to let us know your thoughts.

SKILLS TOOLKIT FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

Mindful that some parents and carers may be experiencing unemployment or uncertainty at the moment, we wanted to make you aware of free courses that are available through the new online platform, the Skills Toolkit. These free, high-quality digital and numeracy courses are designed to help people build up their skills, progress in work and boost their job prospects and confidence whilst at home. The Skills Toolkit can be accessed here:

<https://theskillstoolkit.campaign.gov.uk>



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ONLINE SAFETY

In this time of social isolation, it is important for young people to keep in contact with their friends using social media. However, it is also important to recognise that safe use of the internet and social media is vitally important to protect children and young adults. Please contact your child's school if you have any concerns about internet safety.

Below is a list of Government recommended websites to help you ensure your children stay safe on-line:

- <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/> - Advice from the National Crime Agency to stay safe online.
- <https://www.internetmatters.org/resources/staysafestayhome-tech-advice-for-families/> - Support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online.
- <https://parentinfo.org/> - Support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online.
- <https://www.lgfl.net/> - Support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online.
- <https://www.net-aware.org.uk/> - Support for parents and carers from the NSPCC.
- <https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/> - Tips, advice and guidance for parents and carers.

DEVICES FOR DISADVANTAGED LEARNERS

On Sunday, the Government announced that it will be providing devices (such as laptops or tablets) to support disadvantaged learners during this period of school closure. These devices have been ordered by the Trust for eligible pupils and we will provide more information when we can.

The following groups of children will be eligible for this support:

- children with a social worker
- care leavers
- disadvantaged pupils in Year 10 who will sit key exams next year.

The Trust is also working to support other pupils who do not have access to the internet or a device to support home learning. Headteachers will be in touch with the parents of those pupils to whom this applies.

Finally, I would like to thank you all for your great understanding, patience and support during this challenging time. We pray every day for everyone in our community, that you and your families will all stay safe and well and that anyone who is ill makes a speedy recovery.

Yours sincerely,

Lesley Fitton
CEO