



SEDBERGH SCHOOL

FOUNDED 1525

Sedbergh Schools' response to the risk presented by Novel Coronavirus (Covid-19)

Statement No 14 issued on 27 March 2020

Much has happened since I last wrote but above all I hope that pupils, parents and staff are managing to stay well and safe.

The point of this communication is to let you know what the School has done in the past week, to set out what we intend to do next week and to explain how we intend to communicate with the whole Sedbergh Schools community now that we have moved to remote working and a higher degree of isolation.

I last wrote on 23 March to advise you that the School would be moving to remote working. That was a remarkable process as the entire School community changed gear from regular teaching to a controlled process of departure. Not surprisingly, it had none of the exuberance of the end of Term but everywhere I went I was met with cheerful and resolute pupils and staff who were intent on leaving in an organised manner and offering appreciative farewells. We are deeply conscious that this was not the end of School that our Leavers were looking forward to and will ensure that they enjoy the proper celebrations when that becomes possible.

Since then, we have:

- moved all teaching to online platforms;
- run a complete timetable including the provision of Assemblies, tutoring, pastoral care, Sports, Music and Drama activities;
- provided online resources to support mental health and wellbeing in the Senior School (GoVox);
- transferred all the administrative functions to remote working through rapid investment in technology;
- secured both campuses for an extended period;
- cancelled or postponed major events including the Wilson Run and the Sedbergh National Super Tens Tournament;
- cancelled the Sedbergh School Easter Course programme and offered refunds or transfers to our Summer Courses;
- facilitated the formation of a community support group within Sedbergh town;
- provided support to Sedbergh Medical Centre.

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Many people have been instrumental in enabling us to achieve this, but I wish to highlight the extraordinary work of our Technology staff and those who have helped them. They have configured or reset over 100 computers, purchased and configured new laptops for staff as needed, created new communication capacity and reconfigured large parts of our systems to allow us to work effectively. We could not have achieved all that has happened without them. In the same vein, I offer my thanks to all academic staff and those who lead them for swiftly mastering technology, moving their teaching online and establishing classrooms in their homes. Our collective response reflects the very best of Sedbergh.

I am also pleased to tell you that tests for Covid-19 came back negative for the individual in Evans.

Turning to the future, we have developed six main strands of communication:

1. I shall write weekly, or more frequently if necessary, to advise you of School-wide developments, policy change or development; to let you know when and how significant decisions will be made and when they will be communicated to the School community. This will be sent by email and posted on the Schools' website.
2. The Headmasters, Mr Harrison and Mr Newman, will lead the process of education just as they would in School. They will use Microsoft Teams to lead Assemblies during Term time and provide a daily briefing throughout the holidays.
3. Our social media on Facebook and Twitter will provide you with rolling daily insight into what staff and pupils are doing, provide you with ideas for activities and other links. We are using [#SedberghAtHome](#) for this purpose. We anticipate this situation will go on for a prolonged period and ask parents and pupils to engage with social media, regularly posting their activities and offering encouragement to their peers and Teachers.
4. Housemasters, Housemistresses, Year Heads, Tutors and Form Teachers will all communicate with pupils in their care on a regular basis. This will be through Microsoft Teams or Zoom. Teachers of Year 11 and 13 pupils will be available on at least three mornings of the holidays for individual questions and help.
5. Important staff information will be announced via the established SMS system with regular updates and remote meetings scheduled with the Chief Operating Officer, HR and Finance teams.
6. Our main telephone numbers have been relocated so that they operate as usual.

As we look to the future, we are working on three essential fronts:

Holiday Activities We will provide regular holiday activities for our pupils as we recognise that as the holiday starts, pupils need stimulation and parents need support, many of whom will be working. Both the Prep and Senior Schools will provide a daily briefing with activities whilst the Prep School will provide an optional, light programme of structured learning.

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School Fees

We regret the need to introduce the subject of fees at this difficult time and hope that parents will appreciate this represents the key source of income which allows the Schools to operate. The Governing Body will convene for an Extraordinary General Meeting on Tuesday 31 March following which the decisions made at that meeting will be published on Thursday 2 April.

Support Fund

We have established a fund to support members of the local community who encounter hardship and to support School Fees for families whose situation changes dramatically as a result of the pandemic. We will be seeking support for this from all members of our community and contributions will be welcome at this difficult time.

On a final note, please be aware of the risk presented next week on 1 April (April Fool's Day). For the sake of clarity, Sedbergh will not publish any new information on 1 April; please take extra caution online on that day.

I close by offering my heartfelt thanks for your many messages of support and appreciation; the communications we have received are extraordinarily important to us all at this time.

Andrew Fleck
Principal

27 March 2020

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