



# Northumberland Church of England Academy Trust

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## Coronavirus (Covid-19) Update 8 20/3/20

Dear Parents and Carers

This is the final of the coronavirus updates before we officially close our schools. How long the closures will last is anyone's guess, but indications are that it is likely to be the autumn before we can reopen.

This means that today is almost certainly the last day at Bishop's School for Year 6 and the last day at Duke's School for Year 13 and many of the Year 11 pupils. Staff have worked very hard to ensure that all of those pupils have enjoyed a last day in school which was as happy as possible. As I mentioned yesterday, when coronavirus has been defeated, we will invite all of those pupils back to properly celebrate their time at either Bishop's or Duke's.

I would like to pay tribute to all of our pupils for the calm way they have conducted themselves and their excellent behaviour since the sudden announcement that all schools are closing. I would also like to say a huge thank to our staff for their tremendous work in supporting the pupils at this difficult time and ensuring that we have been able to produce a large amount of resources to support pupils with home learning over the coming weeks. Many staff have waived their entitlement to planning time to cover lessons of absent colleagues, while others have worked many additional hours to put work in place for pupils who will be at home.

I would also like to say thank you to parents and carers for your support and understanding in these unprecedented times.

### How will exam results be awarded for Year 11 and Year 13?

This afternoon, the Department for Education have just announced how exam grades will be awarded for 2020. Full details can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/further-details-on-exams-and-grades-announced> but a basic summary is:

1. Schools will be given a process to follow to submit a teacher assessment for the grade they would have expected each pupil to achieve by the end of their course in May or June.
2. Schools will take into account a range of evidence to predict the grade. While this will include mock exams, it won't simply be a grade based on these alone. Other assessments will count and in subjects where there is coursework (or similar) or pupils have already taken some exams (e.g. BTEC courses) these will also form part of working out the grade.
3. The exam boards will take this data and other data such as prior attainment in SATS (for GCSE) and GCSE for Year 13 to calculate the grades.



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3. Teacher representatives will have a say in the exact method used, to make it as fair as possible.
4. The exam boards aim to have the grades ready to issue to pupils by the end of July.
5. There will be an appeal process for pupils who don't believe their grade is fair and possibly the opportunity to take an exam to improve a grade once schools reopen.

There will be more detail to follow but I hope that this information gives some certainty and comfort to our Year 11 and Year 13 students and their families.

### **The new role of schools from Monday**

As you are aware, the Government have asked schools to make provision for the children of key workers and vulnerable children from Monday. **This applies where there is no other alternative childcare available and children absolutely need to attend school.**

There has been a very significant demand for this provision already and it is possible that we may need to develop a prioritisation system for places. We have operated this week on significantly reduced staff levels, a situation which is likely to worsen as the number of coronavirus cases and self-isolations increase.

We are determined to play a key role in supporting our community's frontline fight against coronavirus. We are working to get a booking system in place as soon as possible and our ability to sustain a provision for as many children as possible will be increased if parents only use this on the days or times where they have no alternative.

### **Future communications**

Although this is the last of the coronavirus updates in this format, we will maintain regular contact with parents and carers throughout the closure period to keep you fully updated. Full details of how and when we will provide these updates will be issued next week. As we all may face some difficult times ahead, early next week we will also provide some details of the support which is available, particularly if you feel your child is vulnerable.

Yours faithfully



Alan Hardie  
Chief Executive  
Northumberland Church of England Academy Trust