Dear Parents/Carers,

Many of you will have seen the televised broadcast by the Prime Minister yesterday evening. You can see the broadcast and read a transcript here https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-address-to-the-nation-on-coronavirus-10-may-2020. Although the Prime Minister announced some modest changes to the lockdown measures this week, he did not announce any immediate changes to schools. Like many other schools, Haberdashers’ Aske’s Hatcham College has remained accessible for a small number of children who are vulnerable or those of key workers are part of the government guidelines. The eligibility criteria for this have not changed. We know some parents/carers who are eligible to use this provision have not chosen to do so until now, so it is possible that they might now make use of the provision if they return to work. We will monitor this situation closely. For all other children, the College remains closed and we will continue to provide work for your children remotely. Our three sites; Jerningham, Pepys (Secondary) and the Sports Field at Nunhead remain closed to children and families until further notice.

In the broadcast (on Sunday 10th May 2020), the Prime Minister described, in very broad terms, a three-stage approach lifting more lockdown measures. In doing so, he set out the earliest possible timeline for the phased re-opening of schools. He said, “…at the earliest by 1st June 2020 (after half term), we believe we may be in a position to get primary pupils back into schools, in stages, beginning with reception, Year 1 and Year 6. Our ambition is that secondary pupils facing exams next year will get at least some time with their teachers before the holidays.”

However, despite thinking carefully about how we would manage social distancing within the College site if we were instructed to open, our advice is simple, like you, we only saw the announcement last night and that at this stage we need to receive more detailed guidance from the government before we can start to make plans for re-opening. I know that you will have lots of questions about how re-opening will work and in particular how to manage it safely for students and for ourselves. We cannot answer those questions until we have more information from the government. There will probably be more guidance for schools in the days ahead. We will continue to follow the government guidance carefully as we make any plans for how to re-open and we will share those plans with you and endeavour to answer any questions you may have about them. We expect that all the government guidance to schools will be published online, as has happened until now, so you can read it for yourself if you would find that helpful. This link takes you to the page where all the guidance to schools is collected together. https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-schools-and-other-educational-settings

I am very grateful for your continued support during this unprecedented time. It is also worth reminding everyone that in the short-term, nothing has changed and we are expected to maintain physical distancing to prevent further spread of the Coronavirus and to reduce risk. I would like to assure you that the support staff and teachers here at the College are continuously working hard, remotely, to ensure that our children are still able to access a Quality First Education, under these new circumstances. I continue to be incredibly impressed by colleagues’ fortitude, flexibility and commitment to supporting students and each other during this crisis. Please remind your children ask for help when in doubt. They can contact their Form Tutors (or Heads of Years) in the first instance, as well as gain feedback from subject teachers. We encourage all students to take the lead by becoming engaged on learning new knowledge and skills whilst studying from home.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]
Seema Solani
Principal