



# Alameda Middle School

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27<sup>th</sup> March 2020

## RE: Closure of Education Settings

Dear parents and carers,

As we reach the end of the first week of school closure for the majority of pupils, I wanted to send you a short update. There are two parts to this letter – the first for parents and carers of pupils currently at home during the school day and the second for those who are attending school on some or all days.

Thank you to everyone who has been following this message:



The fewer pupils who are at school, the safer it is for all of our staff and also the children who need to be here either so that their parents/carers can fulfil the important key worker roles or are those who need our additional support.

### Scam emails

There are currently scam emails circulating, claiming to be linked to the provision of free school meals which are asking for bank details. **Do not respond to these and do not provide your bank details.** There will soon be a national system in place for those of you who are eligible. We have also been in contact about food hampers.

## **Pupils at school**

We are pleased to be able to play our part in supporting key workers and families who may need our support. We have a fairly small number of pupils currently attending school. The Alameda team have worked really hard to organise a suitable provision for the children who are here, whilst also ensuring there are suitable resources for those at home. I am so pleased that many of you have joined me in thanking the staff team for their work at this time.

## **Easter Holidays – Planned Closure**

We are now turning our attention to organising the provision over the Easter holiday period. For the Easter holiday, our provision would **only be for the children of key worker parents/carers** and applying the same criteria for this as we have during term time ie. parents/carers are key workers and unable to make alternative arrangements for childcare.

As we don't know how long the current arrangements will go on for and as we have some staff who are ill or self-isolating, thus putting increased pressure on others, in order that everyone's wellbeing is looked after and to help us be able to provide a sustained service, we plan to **close Alameda totally from Good Friday (10<sup>th</sup> April) to Friday 17<sup>th</sup> April (inclusive of these dates)**.

Of course, we do want to continue to support key workers and therefore if there are any key worker families who are unable to make provision for childcare on these dates, we will aim to work with other local schools. If this is the case for you, **please contact us via the [office@alamedamiddleschool.org.uk](mailto:office@alamedamiddleschool.org.uk) email by Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> April.**

We are also working with Central Bedfordshire who have provisionally agreed for us to host a music workshop in the first week of the holidays. More information to follow about this.

## **Booking Places and Attendance**

We are sending a letter to everyone who is on our list as due to be attending school full or part time at present. In order that we can plan more effectively and also make our attendance system more efficient. From Monday 30<sup>th</sup> March we will be introducing a booking system via Edulink and have sent a letter to you separately. If you have not received this letter and think you should (as you have identified yourself as a key worker needing a place or your child has been attending), please call us at school or email [office@alamedamiddleschool.org.uk](mailto:office@alamedamiddleschool.org.uk).

If your child is currently on the list to attend and you wish for them to be removed as you have made alternative arrangements please call us at school or email [office@alamedamiddleschool.org.uk](mailto:office@alamedamiddleschool.org.uk).

From Monday, once this system is in place, you will only need to contact [pupilsabsence@alamedamiddleschool.org.uk](mailto:pupilsabsence@alamedamiddleschool.org.uk) or phone the absence line if your child is absent and you have booked a place via Edulink.

## Pupils at home

Thank you to all of you who have commented about the resources our teachers have added to the website. We will continue to add to this throughout the closure. I hope you got the message from my last letter (24<sup>th</sup> March) that these are unprecedented circumstances and that I really don't want you to feel under pressure. Here are some more tips for home learning:

- The emotional wellbeing of your child is far more important than their education right now. If they are settled and able to focus, then completing some school work is great, but if they are struggling and need some time, that is fine too. Don't compare your child to someone else's, you know them best and can judge accordingly.
- Let your child lead the learning. If they are struggling to organise, use (or adapt) the timetable I sent out on 24<sup>th</sup> March, or follow their school one but cut it down significantly.
- Free online resources are great but the choice can be overwhelming and confusing. Let your child choose one or two and stick to those for now. We have shared a lot, so don't feel you need to use all of them.
- Don't feel that you need to work with your children all of the time, they should be independent – in class, they probably wouldn't get 1:1 teacher support. You are likely to have work and other responsibilities.
- While a lot of activities are online, be mindful of too much screen time. Physical activity and time away from the screen is really important.
- Reading is a great activity. Central Bedfordshire libraries have provided ebooks for free at [www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/libraries](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/libraries)
- Apple and Audible have made hundreds of audio books and e-books free. You can access them via the Apple Books App or <https://stories.audible.com/discovery>.
- There is not a need to produce pages of paper based work. In most cases, work can be done online.

As a reminder, the link to the activities set by our teachers can be found here:

[Alameda Middle School - Curriculum](#)

The folders will be updated regularly.

Ms Leonard wanted to add a separate note about maths activities. The curriculum folder for maths includes resources from Dynamic Learning. This is based on the scheme of work we follow in years 7 and 8, it has resources (including answers) with PowerPoint explanations and PDF documents. It is the programme that our teachers would normally use to plan with. Ms Leonard will also add tasks for all years on MathsWatch, which will then be instantly marked.

For all work, our teachers will be happy to look through any points, but it will not be possible, or indeed beneficial to mark all items. We therefore encourage pupils to self mark where they can and to check their work using answers where provided. We advise that you keep as much as work as possible online to reduce the amount of paper used.

## **Alameda Facebook**

While we didn't want to use Alameda Facebook initially for sharing information about school closure, we have recently started to share resources and links that you may find useful. Again, there is no expectation that you will follow these and it is totally up to you to use your judgement about what is suitable for your child(ren). I also appreciate that the volume of links and resources may be overwhelming, but as advised above, get your child(ren) to pick some and stick with those for now.

Our main use of Facebook as a school is to share examples of pupils' work where they have been inspired by their learning, to share news of achievement and to showcase where pupils have been able to excel. If you have any pictures or work to share, I would be happy to post these. You can start to send them to me via email and I will try to add them. I just want to be clear, however, that there is no pressure to do this and I also ask that you bear with me if the volume received is high. A reminder, my email is: [mwarner@alamedamiddleschool.org.uk](mailto:mwarner@alamedamiddleschool.org.uk).

Mr Harley has also volunteered to collate and share any ideas about creative home learning via the website and/or Facebook. You can email these directly to him at [pharley@alamedamiddleschool.org.uk](mailto:pharley@alamedamiddleschool.org.uk)

I'll leave it up to you to decide which one of us you want to share your pictures with.

## **PE YouTube Channel**

Our new PE YouTube channel, Alameda TV, has been created by the PE department to act as a hub for a wide range of ideas and resources to help keep your children active whilst they are not at school.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCKbkQFGOqIF0tYEuM3gh-jg/featured>

## **Paper copies of pupil activities**

We have produced paper copies of packs for pupils who do not have access to the internet for home learning. Please contact us by telephone or email at [office@alamedamiddleschool.org.uk](mailto:office@alamedamiddleschool.org.uk) if you require one of these.

## **Kooth**

Please be aware of the support for young people (11 and over) available from Kooth. There are links to the service on our website.

<http://www.alamedamiddleschool.org.uk/page/?title=Kooth+%2D+online+support+for+young+people&pid=157>

## **Parent Resources from National Online Safety**

We have recently bought into nationalonlinesafety.com which provides resources for children, parents and teachers. You can register for this by following the link below:

<http://nationalonlinesafety.com/enrol/alameda-middle-school>

As with all other resources, I am mindful of the sheer volume, but wanted to share this in case you find it useful, particularly at this time.

### **Latest Guidance form the DfE**

We have continued to follow the guidance from Public health England and the Department for Education throughout recent weeks. Some of the receipt guidance on social distancing in schools is here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-social-distancing-in-education-and-childcare-settings/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-social-distancing-in-education-and-childcare-settings>

In line with this guidance, I wanted to remind you of the following:

- Please continue to follow guidance on social distancing and do not gather at drop off points.
- Do not visit the school or send your child to school if any member of the household is displaying symptoms of COVID-19

### **Reports of Groups of Pupils in the Local Area**

While this comes outside my remit as Headteacher, a number of local residents have contacted me via email or telephone expressing their concern about some large groups of children and young people still meeting up around the town, as well as in Maulden and Flitwick. I know this is a relatively small number and that most families are following the guidance well. I did, however, want to share this via my latest letter and encourage you all to stay safe and follow the guidance.

Our week here has gone well and I would like to thank you for you messages of support. I would also like to thank all of the other key workers in more “front line” roles. Hat’s off to you at this time.

Along with other members of the Alameda team, I will continue to be in touch.

Yours sincerely



Maxine Warner  
Headteacher

# Kooth.com

Ages 11-20

## Online support for young people

We would like to remind you of the availability of our online service to support the **wellbeing** and **resilience** of your students.

Kooth is a web based confidential support service available to young people. Kooth provides a safe and secure means of accessing mental health and wellbeing support designed specifically for young people.

Kooth offers young people the opportunity to have a text-based conversation with a qualified counsellor. Counsellors are available from 12noon to 10pm on weekdays and 6pm to 10 pm at weekends, every day of the year on a drop-in basis. Young people can access regular booked online counselling sessions as needed. Outside counselling hours' young people can message our team and get support by the next day.

When students register with Kooth they will have support available to them now and in the future. Support can be gained not only through counselling but articles, forums and discussion boards. All content is age appropriate, clinically approved and fully moderated.

**To find out more visit [kooth.com](https://www.kooth.com) where young people can register and others can find out more about the service.**

**kooth**

