



Charles Darwin School

Operated by the Charles Darwin Academy Trust

Headteacher: Sunil Chotai, BSc

19th March 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

COVID-19 – School Closure

Further to the government's announcement yesterday I am writing to you to inform you that Charles Darwin School will be closed from Monday 23rd March until further notice. As per the government's guidance, the school will remain open only for children of key workers, children with an Education and Health Care Plan, those that are Looked After Children and those that have social worker intervention. We are awaiting clarity as to the definition of key workers and are anticipating this to include NHS staff, emergency services and social care workers.

In order for us to plan provision for those that are likely to need this school provision during the period of closure, we urgently need information from families. I am therefore asking parents and carers to let me know via email (schoolclosure@cdarwin.com) if they would like their children to be included on the list of those we can expect to attend. A form is attached and I would be grateful if this could be completed and **returned to the school by 2.00pm on Friday 20th March.** Children attending during the school closure do not need to be in school uniform.

We will be contacting families of those children who are eligible for free school meals in a separate letter.

We have made arrangements to set work for all students via the Showmyhomework online facility that we currently use to set homework and other independent work. Parents will appreciate that the setting of this work will go only part of the way to compensate for missed lessons. Parents will also understand that the setting of appropriate work for practical subjects that involve experiments, group work, team play etc. will not be possible. However, we will endeavour to set some work in all subjects. If for any reason a student does not recall their log in details for Showmyhomework then you should email your child's form tutor with a request for a reminder. For those students who do not have access to a home computer, paper work packs have been prepared.

Whilst the government have announced that GCSE and A Level exams will not take place, it is important that students in Years 11 and 13 continue to work hard on assignments set by their teachers. We are awaiting clarification as to how students' final grades will be arrived at, at the moment we anticipate some sort of teacher assessment being used. It is consequently important that students continue to work hard at this crucial stage. I understand that many of our examination students are feeling vulnerable and I want to reassure families that we will do all we can to ensure that these students are not disadvantaged in any way.

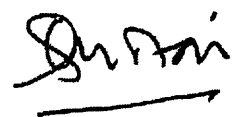
During this period of closure students will be expected to undertake the set work and as much additional academic work as they possibly can; my advice would be for all students to complete the work set by their teachers and then if any time is available undertake self-directed reading and revision around the topics covered recently in their lessons. Students can use a variety of online resources that have been made available, for example students in Years 9 - 11 can use GCSE pod (our new comprehensive online resource in all subjects, details attached) for self-directed study. Children in all years can use other online platforms such as Seneca Learning, Maths Watch, Linguascope and so on. Teachers will inform students via Showmyhomework if they need to use a particular online package for the teacher set work.

I am not sure at this stage how long the school will remain closed; we will of course be guided by the appropriate authorities and I will keep you all informed via messages on our school website. Can parents please note that the school bus service (664 and 684) will not run from Monday 23rd March.

Lastly I would like to remind parents that whilst the school is closed it is important that students are not out and about in the community during school hours, they are expected to be at home working on school work. These are unprecedented times and we would want all our students to react in a mature and sensible manner. So far the vast majority have shown a very mature and responsible reaction to the national and local situation. Your support with this will be most appreciated.

If for any reason you need to contact me then please feel free to email the school at schoolclosure@cdarwin.com.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sunil Chotai', with a horizontal line underneath it.

Sunil Chotai
Headteacher

Attendance during school closure

For key workers/parents/carers of children with an EHCP, Looked After Children and those that have social worker intervention.

Parent/carer name:

Child's name: Form:

I would like my child/children to continue to attend during the period of school closure.

I confirm that I am a key worker employed by as a

My child has an EHCP/ is a Looked After Child/ has social worker intervention

Please return via email to: schoolclosure@cdarwin.com by 2.00pm on Friday 20th March

How to support your child using GCSEPod



gcsepod
education on demand

What is GCSEPod?

GCSEPod is an award-winning expert in subject knowledge. We provide 3-5 minute bursts of audio-visual, teacher written learning which can help to reinforce and consolidate key GCSE topics covered in lessons.

Experts read and explain everything clearly including all the right facts, quotes, keywords, dates and diagrams on screen.

Tips and Tricks



Watch online or offline

Ask your child to download Pods to their mobile device so they can learn on the go!



Favourites

Challenge your child to 'favourite' 10 Pods on topics they find difficult. Watch the Pods together and use one of our other suggested learning techniques to help simplify what it is they're struggling with.



Personalised Playlists

Use the My Playlists area to create bespoke playlists. Having personalised playlists means your child has fast access to Pods that will help fill knowledge gaps.



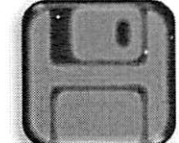
Support Homework

GCSEPod isn't just for revision, it's to help expand your child's subject knowledge. If your child is struggling with a piece of homework, you can search for the topic on GCSEPod and use the Pods as an additional resource.



Quizzes

Turn it into a competition and reward your child for correctly answered questions. If you're stuck on what questions to ask, head over to our 'Quiz Your Child' crib sheet!



Memory Cards

Watch Pods together and then write down key facts, dates, diagrams and quotes. Test their knowledge to see how much they remember.

How does your child access GCSEPod?

If your child has already activated their account, they simply need to log in with the username and password they've created.

If they've not yet activated their GCSEPod account, simply follow these simple steps!

1. Go to www.gcsepod.com
2. Click 'Login'.
3. Click 'New Here? Get Started'.
4. Select 'Student'.
5. Follow the on-screen instructions to create a username and password.





KNOWLEDGE ROUND-UP

Test your child on their Pod knowledge with some of these general questions.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. What did you learn from watching the Pod?
2. What will you remember?
3. Tell me 3 key words you have learnt from the Pod.
4. Tell me everything you know on the topic.
5. How confident do you feel on the subject?
6. Do you think you need to learn more on that subject?
7. What part of the Pod interested you the most?
8. What was your favourite part of the Pod?
9. Teach me what you've learnt.
10. Where you surprised by what you've learnt?
11. What was your least favourite part?

Tip!

Print out this page, take it everywhere you go and ask questions when you're in the supermarket, in the car, cooking dinner...

ENGLISH LITERATURE QUESTIONS

1. What's the book/play about?
2. Can you give me a plot overview?
3. Where is the book/play set?
4. How does the setting reflect the book?
5. Who are the main characters in the book/play?
6. What genre is the book?
7. Do you know any important quotes?
8. What is the structure of the book?
9. What are the book/plays themes?
10. Does the story interest you? Why?

CHARACTER QUESTIONS

1. Who are the main three characters of the play/book?
2. What are their relationship with each other?
3. Which social class do they belong to?
4. Do the main characters change by the end of the book/play? How?
5. If you had the change to talk and ask each character a question - what would you ask them and why?

Tip!

Think of some specific questions on other subjects, like photosynthesis, algebra or WWII.





Dear Students,

You will all be aware that the decision has been made to close the school in response to the Coronavirus outbreak. This is of course unprecedented, I do hope that you are not unduly worried by this and not anxious.

Whilst you are away from school your teachers will set you work. As has been explained to you already this work will be communicated to you via Showmyhomework. This will mean that you will have to log onto Showmyhomework regularly – each day to understand what has been set by your teachers.

Our expectation is that you will use the time you are away from school to:

1. Undertake the work that has been set.
2. Undertake revision work on topics that you have already studied this year in each subject by using on line resources such as Seneca learning, GCSEPod, MyMaths, Mathswatch, Linguascope etc.
3. If you are in Years 11 and 13 we expect you to continue to work hard and complete the work set. Whilst exams will not now take place, it is vitally important that you do not disadvantage yourself at this crucial time when we do not know fully how GCSE and A Level grades will be arrived at.

It is usually helpful when you are working away from school to establish a routine. For example:

1. Get up at the usual time
2. Work for 2 hours
3. Have a break for half an hour
4. Work for 2 more hours
5. Have a break for 1 hour
6. Work for another hour

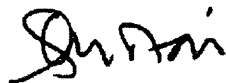
So I would encourage you to develop such a routine in discussion with your parents, adapting this to suit your own individual circumstances.

Whilst we are away from school it is important that all students adhere to school, parent and government expectations. The expectation is that all students should be at home working as far as is possible on school work. The whole point of school closure is to minimise social contact that contributes to the spread of the virus so we would like you to be very aware of this and for your behaviour to reflect this. So please do not do anything that goes against this; that would be socially irresponsible. For example do not go out and hang about by the local shops or be in the community. This would be very immature and irresponsible and something that all of us, parents, school and government will be disappointed about. This is a time of national crisis and we all need to do our part to ensure that we are helping and minimising stress levels for others and contributing to the national effort.

Whilst you are at home please also be mindful of the stress levels that will be on your families; many families will have much to worry about. It is important that you help, show kindness and generally support one another to ease any such situations.

During the school closure, students should not come on to the school site. The Darwin Leisure Centre will also be closed and students should not take it upon themselves to access any sports facilities or any part of the school site.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sunil Chotai', with a horizontal line underneath it.

Sunil Chotai
Headteacher