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Head of School: Mr Pierre Coiffait

Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

We have been following the advice from Public Health England throughout this developing crisis with coronavirus (Covid 19), and last night the guidance changed as follows:

1. although the guidance is titled "Protecting older people and vulnerable adults", nevertheless it states "any age member of a vulnerable group with an underlying health condition" which it explains means "anyone instructed to get a flu jab each year on medical grounds";
2. the Public Health England guidance then describes these medical grounds as including people with "a learning disability or cerebral palsy";
3. and gives prescribed steps for 'social distancing' that include: "avoid non-essential use of public transport", "avoid large gatherings, and gatherings in smaller public spaces such as pubs, cinemas, restaurants, theatres" and "avoid gatherings with friends and family. Keep in touch using remote technology".

The New Bridge Multi Academy Trust leadership, along with the schools, have taken the view that this new guidance suggests that a special school environment, along with daily transport journeys, is a riskier place for your child to be during the 'delay phase' of the epidemic, than to be at home with you, where you can shield them from contact with others as far as is possible.

This means that **we will close Hawthorns School with effect from tomorrow, Wednesday 18th March.**

We do appreciate that this notice is short. However, in light of the speed of the epidemic, the safety and welfare of our pupils and staff is of paramount importance and has to be our number one priority.

We will meet and work with our Local Authorities to monitor the situation and seek to resume our services when we are advised that it is safe to do so. Please check our school website daily, where we will post updates, guidance and further information as it becomes available.

Thank you for all your support during these unprecedented and anxious times. Please follow all advice to keep your families safe and well.

Yours sincerely,

Pierre Coiffait  
Head of School  
Hawthorns Special School, Audenshaw