



Closure of Victory Academy on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> July

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am so incredibly sad to inform you that one of our teachers has tragically died in a road traffic accident. Many of you, and your children, will know Sam Rooks, who was second in charge of our English department here at Victory. He was a brilliant teacher and a great friend. Our thoughts are with Sam's girlfriend, Sarah, and his family and friends.

The news has devastated us and I know it will also hit hard those of you who knew him, and those of you whose children were taught by him, as it will our whole community. Sam was not just incredibly popular with staff in our academy and our trust, but with students and with you.

We have been in direct contact with Sarah and she has asked that we commemorate and celebrate Sam, and never forget him. We never will – and with time, we will work as a community to make sure we celebrate and remember him in true Victory style. The plans laid out below will give us an initial opportunity to come together and support each other and your children. These plans also, of course, have to be in line with Government requirements around social distancing so that we are all as safe as possible.

I know that you will understand the need for discretion and for privacy at this time, so that we can protect any intrusion into the overwhelming grief of Sam's family and friends, and his students. Thank you for your support.

Please read the below information carefully so that you are fully aware of what will be happening tomorrow. This will allow staff in our school and trust, and students who knew Sam, some time to grieve and remember him.

- **There will be no childcare provision, remote learning, scheduled meetings or bubble education taking place at the academy tomorrow (Monday).** This provision will resume at Victory on Tuesday.
- **Provision for children of key workers and vulnerable children will instead take place at Holcombe Grammar School tomorrow (Monday).** If your child is in these categories, then they should attend at Holcombe as they would have at Victory. You will be contacted by a member of Victory staff today to confirm arrangements. This provision will resume at Victory on Tuesday.
- **The academy will be closed to all students on Monday morning**
- At 12pm (until 5pm), we will be opening books of condolence. Students who Sam has taught will be invited into the academy to write their memories in the books, which will be held in the Galley. For those students who need additional support, staff will be available for them.



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[www.thevictoryacademy.org.uk](http://www.thevictoryacademy.org.uk)

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- So that social distancing is adhered to at all times, we have allocated the following times when students in different year groups who Sam taught can attend to pay their respects. It is really important for health and safety reasons that students do not come to the academy outside these times.

There will be a one- way system in operation. All students must enter through the pedestrian path next to the vehicle gate and exit via reception and through the student gate.

Time	Students welcomed
12 – 12.45pm	Year 7 students who were taught by Sam
12.50 – 1.35pm	Year 8 students who were taught by Sam
1.40 – 2.25pm	Year 9 students who were taught by Sam
2.30 – 3pm	Year 10 students who were taught by Sam
3.05 – 3.35pm	Year 11 students who were taught by Sam
3.40 – 4.10pm	Year 12 and 13 students who were taught by Sam

- We have created a space where there will be a memorial on the grass banks in front of the Galley. Again for critically important social distancing reasons and to keep them safe, any students (or parents) must not linger here. So, once any tribute has been laid, please do move on and do not comfort one another, however much you may very naturally and understandably want to. I would be very grateful if you could ensure your children are aware of this and abide by it.

Monday is when we will grieve together as a community. We will then create longer term plans, with student voice, on how we will honour Sam’s memory and celebrate his impact at Victory in the weeks and months to come.

I am so sorry to have to break this news to you of this via an email. Please do not hesitate to reach out. We will support each other through this devastating news.

Yours sincerely,

Mandy Gage  
Director of Education



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