



16 March 2020

Dear Parents

RE: Coronavirus (COVID-19)

As you are aware, the government will be releasing updated guidance to schools regarding Coronavirus in the coming days. At present the risk to individuals still remains low. However, in line with the new advice, we have now begun to step up precautions and contingency planning so we are prepared to meet any escalation. This action is designed to contain the spread of the virus by risk assessing our activity and keep core education going for as long as we can without interruption. Non-essential exposure to those outside of the school community for staff and learners is our key aim.

The most important advice remains in that the best way to reduce the likelihood of the virus spreading is to avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands and to wash your hands thoroughly with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds; or to use hand sanitiser with at least 60% alcohol content, at regular intervals throughout the day. This includes before leaving home, on arrival at school, after using the toilet, after breaks and sporting activities, before food preparation, before eating any food - including snacks, and before leaving school. Within schools we are ensuring to keep bathrooms stocked up with suitable soap products to enable this and continue to reiterate to students the importance of good hygiene, with clear posters around the school. We have stepped up cleaning procedures to make sure shared surfaces, such as door handles and desks are kept clean.

At this time, we are not closing the school as we have not yet been advised by the government to do so. The decision to close will only be made in response to government advice or exceptional circumstances, and as a result we still expect staff and students to continue to attend school unless there is concern that an individual may be infected.

We have taken the following steps:

- Postponed or cancelled all overseas school trips
- Postponed or cancelled trips in the UK
- Postponed or cancelled attendance at external meetings where appropriate
- Postponed or cancelled sport fixtures
- Cancelled the use of the school building for external lettings
- Postponed or cancelled any employer visits
- Postponed or cancelled visiting speakers
- Postponed or cancelled any learner work experience
- Postponed or cancelled parental events, information evenings, music concerts and the like

For those expecting to take public examinations this year, exam board guidance remains to prepare as normal. However, we will be monitoring official advice and formulating contingency plans to enable us to react to changes should they occur.

The symptoms of Coronavirus are:

- a persistent cough
- a high temperature
- shortness of breath

If any student or member of staff is displaying symptoms of Coronavirus infection (COVID-19) however mild, they must not come to school. Instead they should:

- stay at home, self-isolate and not leave the house for 7 days from when the symptoms started.
- Stay at least 2 metres away from other people in the home whenever possible
- Wash hands regularly for 20 seconds, each time using soap and water
- Stay away from vulnerable individuals such as the elderly and those with underlying health conditions as much as possible

You do not need to call NHS 111 to go into self-isolation. If the symptoms worsen during home isolation or are no better after 7 days, contact NHS 111.

The school should also be advised by telephone that the individual is self-isolating pending testing/further advise. Should any cases of the virus be confirmed within our schools, we will then liaise with Public Health England to discuss the case and the appropriate action which will need to be taken.

Advice for those traveling remains the same, in that anyone returning from a particularly affected area should self-isolate for 14 days regardless of whether they exhibit symptoms. All other returning travellers should only isolate if they develop symptoms of the virus. We would ask that anyone traveling to a particularly affected region considers whether their trip is necessary.

I do wish to reassure students, parents and staff that we are keeping abreast of the situation and taking all possible steps to minimise disruption and maximise the health and wellbeing of all those within our care. The safety of everyone within our school community is our prime priority and we will continue to take all necessary steps to protect them.

At this time of uncertainty we will endeavour to communicate with you on a daily basis, in line with the government advice, and encourage everyone to take suitable precautions to protect themselves and those around them.

For the latest government advice please see: <http://bit.ly/3aLFqMy>

Dee Elliott
Headteacher