

Wednesday 18th March, 2020

Dear Parents, Guardians and Staff,

Re: Corona Virus Update.

Following the Government announcements on Monday 16th, and yesterday's further guidance I wanted to update you on our response as a Trust to the impact of the Corona Virus pandemic on our schools.

Our continued 'first position' is that we continue to receive updates from each Local Authority's Public Health Departments, Public Health England and the Department for Education on how we should be responding to the changing situation. We are working with our schools to do all that we can to keep them open and to ensure the safety of the pupils, families, staff and communities linked to our schools.

We have not had any confirmed cases in any of our schools, but do have some staff and families who are self-isolating following advice. Government advice now is that anyone experiencing a new continuous cough, or high temperature should self-isolate for 14 days. People do not need to call NHS 111, contact their GP or ask for a test (<https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19>). This does not mean that they have the Coronavirus but is a measure intended to reduce the risk of spreading it.

Where families have one family member showing symptoms and another without, but no confirmed case of the virus, non-symptomatic staff and pupils must also stay at home and self-isolate for 14 days. **We will authorise all absences related to Coronavirus symptoms or precautions based on the 7 and 14 day isolation period as advised.** Please inform your school if this is the case.

You will also have seen from Monday's announcements that a further duty of care was placed on everyone to support and protect adults and children linked to our schools who are classed as 'vulnerable' due to underlying health and medical reasons. A number of staff, pupils and members of our families and communities fall into these identified groups and following advice those members of staff and children have now gone into a period of social distancing and self-isolation.

It is highly likely that this, along with the new self-isolation guidance, will have an impact on the number of pupils and the staffing levels in our schools and may, ultimately, result in partial or full school closures being necessary for the safety of the pupils and staff. We have been carefully planning for this eventuality and are doing everything that we can to keep our schools open. In order to do this it is likely that you will see a number of measures put in place to help us manage the opening of our schools, as well as mitigating against the risk of the virus spreading such as:

- Children may be taught by different teachers or in classrooms other than their usual ones
- Class sizes may be temporarily larger than usual
- Children may do activities which are different to those they would normally be doing
- If catering staff are affected you may need to provide your children with packed lunches
- School trips, assemblies and/or school events will not go ahead
- Lunch/play times may change

- Child collection procedures may need to be adapted
- Staff, parents, governor training and meetings will be postponed, or run in a different way such as using telephones/technology where practical and possible.

As the situation develops, we will continue to do everything possible to keep you updated and informed. Should the school have to close, or if schools are subject to closure by the Government, we have well developed contingency plans in place to ensure that learning is able to continue in as many ways as possible. You can expect:

- Full provision will be in place within 5 days of the notice of closure being issued, with some provision in place from the first day of closure.
- Parents and pupils will be advised by the school of the 'home school' provision that will be provided through the usual parental communication methods. This will be specific to the school, but will ensure at least:
 - Links to specific learning will be made available via the school websites.
 - Daily tasks in Reading, Writing and Maths will be made available for all pupils to support their ongoing learning.

We will continue to keep you updated as the guidance changes and develops and will keep you up to date with the impact on the schools.

We appreciate that this is a challenging, worrying and uncertain time for everyone. We are extremely grateful to you all for your continued support for our schools and our staff who are doing their very best in very difficult circumstances. We are also grateful for your support in slowing the spread of the virus by following the guidance previously sent out by your school.

Our thanks for your patience as we work together to do all that we can to manage this situation over the forthcoming weeks and months.

With kind regards,



Jez Piper

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