

17 March 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

I realise that the Principal of your school may have recently communicated with you regarding the global Coronavirus outbreak and how it currently affects your child's education. I would like to follow that up with our latest position as a Trust.

We are committed to following guidance issued by the government and Public Health England. I would emphasise that the latest guidance given by the government on 16 March, clearly stated that if an individual displays symptoms, the entire household must also self-isolate for fourteen days. This is to help to slow the transmission of the illness. Please can we ask that everyone is vigilant, looks out for these symptoms and follows the guidance, as inconvenient as this might be? It is likely that over the next few weeks, members of staff might also develop symptoms and need to self-isolate.

Whilst the government is relaxing rules on class sizes, there might come a point when we have insufficient staff available to keep the school safe. It might then become necessary to shut the school to certain year groups. We all hope to avoid this, but we also need to be realistic about potential scenarios. In such a situation, we will prioritise opening for pupils preparing for imminent public examinations, as well as for younger pupils who would require more supervision at home.

I hope and expect that you will support this reasoning, especially given the extra-ordinary circumstances that we are currently experiencing. We will use your school's website to post Trust update messages, along with specific school information about how your child's school intends to deliver continuous education and support their education in the event of school closure.

Useful information:

The Department for Education (DfE) have set up a helpline that is now available to answer questions about COVID-19, relating to education and children's social care. Staff, parents, carers and young people can contact this helpline as follows:

Phone: 0800 046 8687

Email: DfE.coronavirushelpline@education.gov.uk Opening hours: 8am to 6pm (Monday to Friday)

Undoubtedly the best way to tackle the challenge posed by Coronavirus is by following Public Health England's advice, for example on hand washing, and reducing the impact and spread of misinformation by relying on information from trusted sources, such as that on <http://www.nhs.uk> and <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

We appreciate this is an uncertain time for everyone but please be reassured that the Trust will do all it can to minimise any impact. If you have any concerns please contact your school through the usual channels.

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Finally, in summary:

- We remain open at present;
- if **your child or a member of your household** have symptoms, **all** household members must stay at home and not leave the house for 14 days. The 14-day period starts from the day when the first person in the house became ill;
- for anyone in the household who starts displaying symptoms, they need to stay at home for 7 days from when the symptoms appeared, regardless of what day they are on in the original 14 day isolation period;
- Please understand that these are unprecedented circumstances and we will be doing our best at all times.

We are in daily contact with the DfE, as well as the Local Authority, and are liaising with other schools locally and I will continue to provide updates as and when appropriate.

In the meantime, can I thank you all for your patience and support and ask that you continue to impress on your children the need for excellent personal hygiene and considerate behaviour to minimise the risks to all of us and our family members?

Regards



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