



Monday 16th March 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

As I'm sure you will appreciate, we are currently dealing with a complex and rapidly changing situation. My first priority will always be the health and safety of the pupils and staff in our school. Now more than ever, this remains our primary focus.

This is an entirely unprecedented situation and we are following official advice from the government and the NHS. This advice is being added to on a daily basis and we are monitoring and responding to that as it is published.

Whilst I appreciate that there will be a wide range of different views about how we should be responding and what action should be taken, I hope you will appreciate that I am duty bound to follow the official advice from the government.

I want to reassure you that we are doing everything we can to keep the pupils safe and prevent the spread of the virus. Already in school, we have continued to take extra precautions when cleaning the school and increased personal hygiene regimes, encouraging staff and children to wash their hands thoroughly and use hand sanitisers on entry to the school office and in the dining hall.

**How is the situation currently affecting the school?**

We have taken the precautionary measure of cancelling all educational visits up until the Easter break on 3rd April. This includes all sports fixtures and weekly activities that involve children leaving the school. This is, as much as anything else, about protecting staff and children during a period where cover may be extensive. In addition, we have cancelled visits to the school by external agencies, schools and colleges.

**Will the school close?**

You will have heard the news conference conducted by the Prime Minister last week. The situation remains uncertain with regards to both the spread and the predicted peak of the virus and schools have been asked to remain open for now. It is important for us to remain open for as long as possible, and we will continue to do so unless we are asked to do otherwise by the Department of Education and Public Health England, or factors outside of our control mean that we cannot.

If the school were to close either fully or partially, we would notify you via text, letter and on the school's website. It is imperative, if you have not done so already, that you provide us with the most up to date telephone numbers for parents/carers.

In the event of a closure, your child would be sent home with a pack of reading and topic homework to be completed in their homework book and instructions for how to access maths online, as well as additional websites with activities that will keep your children busy! You will still be able to contact the school via email.

#### **What can I do to support?**

The most helpful thing you can do is to ensure that they can access a computer to work on should the school need to close. This would enable them to access materials online and via email. It does not need to be an expensive device: a chromebook or similar that has internet access would suffice. If you are unable to provide your child with a computer to use, please let us know so that we can try to make alternative arrangements. We are not in a position to be able to provide devices but will do all we can to provide work via an alternative method should that be the case.

#### **What if my child is ill?**

If your child does not display any symptoms, has not visited a high-risk area or come into contact with a person who has been tested positive, please continue to send them to school. The latest NHS guidance states that anyone with a **high temperature and a new, continuous cough** should stay at home for seven days. If your child displays these symptoms, please keep them at home and contact the school as you usually would.

#### **Avoiding Anxiety:**

The government and the NHS have given lots of advice about Coronavirus (also called Covid-19) available on their websites. I recommend that you look to those sources of information for updates and news about the virus and avoid listening to rumour and second hand information from other sources.

We need to be aware that this virus along with other world issues such as climate change, international relations and their future prospects may heighten some children's anxieties .

#### **You know your own child best, but together we should:**

- ***Do our best not to sensationalise or over dramatise the issue.***
- ***Steer children away from some of the news coverage and social media channels.***
- ***Stick to known facts rather than speculation.***
- ***Avoid passing on our own concerns to our children.***

There are a small number of children and staff with underlying health issues. They and their families will know best how to stay safe but we will support these groups as best as we can, taking into account advice from the NHS 111 service and government websites.

We all have our own levels for tolerating stress, anxiety and disruption and will react to situations like this in our own way. Our resources may be stretched for some time, so please try to work with us and be considerate. Our staff will and are doing their very best to protect you, your children and their education during this very difficult time period.

Our priorities are ensuring that we keep your child safe and continue to educate them. Please take care of yourselves and rest assured that we are doing all we can to achieve these aims. I will keep you updated with any further developments.

Many thanks for your continued support and cooperation.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Diane Barrick', written in a cursive style.

Diane Barrick  
Headteacher