

11 March 2020

Dear Parents / Carers

I write further to my letter of 24 February 2020, to provide an update in respect of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19).

Over the two week period since the previous letter was written, the government has published its coronavirus action plan to outline what the health and social care system across the UK has done to tackle the outbreak, and what it plans to do next. The plan can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-action-plan>

At the time of writing, the UK is currently in the “Contain” phase of the action plan, the aim of which is to prevent the disease taking hold in this country for as long as is reasonable possible. If you are concerned that you or a member of your family may have contracted the coronavirus, you should use the online coronavirus service at 111.nhs.uk to establish whether you need to take further action, such as self-isolation. At the moment this is only required if you have recently travelled from an (increasingly long) list of countries, or have been in contact with a confirmed case of infection, although the guidance may change at any time - if it does so, the updates will be available online immediately.

If you or your child does meet any of the criteria for self-isolation, I would be grateful if you would contact the school immediately to make us aware.

Guidance regarding schools remains largely unchanged - there is no indication that children are put at increased risk by attending school, and the plan states that “based on current data overall illness seems rarer in people under 20 years of age”. It is clear, however, that schools do have an important role to play in delaying the spread of the virus and its impact.

In the short term, the most important action we can all take is to ensure that the government’s advice about hygiene, and particularly hand-washing, is followed at all times. Measures currently being taken in school include:

- The display of NHS posters as a reminder of the importance of washing hands, and how to do it properly
- Regular checking of soap dispensers throughout the day to ensure that they do not run out
- Regular reminders to students, e.g through assemblies and via form tutors, about hand-washing and other hygiene advice.
- Looking ahead, you may also be aware that the “Delay” phase of the coronavirus action plan includes the possibility of school closures to slow the spread of the virus. The most up to date information we have on this is as follows:
- The school currently remains open to all students.
- The only circumstances in which a single school may close temporarily, for example if a student or member of staff is confirmed to be infected with the coronavirus, would be when instructed to do so by Public Health England

- There is currently no indication that a larger programme of school closures will take place. If this does happen, it will be coordinated by Local Authorities in the affected region(s).

We also continue to update our own contingency planning for the potential disruption which might be caused, for example, by large scale absence of staff in the event of a more serious outbreak. We are working with our partner schools in The Northworthy Trust to put in place measures which would allow us to share expertise and resource if key personnel became ill. In particular, we are considering a number of scenarios for the summer examination season to ensure that there is as little impact as possible for Year 11 students as they approach this important stage of their education. We will continue to follow guidance from examination boards and the Department for Education as the situation evolves.

Thank you for your ongoing support at what is a challenging time not just for schools but throughout the UK and indeed the world. I will continue to provide updates whenever there are significant changes.

Yours faithfully



Ms J Harlow
Headteacher

What can I do to prevent catching and spreading viruses?



<p>Wash hands frequently with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds, or use sanitizer gel.</p> 	<p>Catch coughs and sneezes with disposable tissues.</p> 
<p>Throw away used tissues (then wash hands).</p> 	<p>If you don't have a tissue use your sleeve.</p> 
<p>Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.</p> 	<p>Avoid close contact with people where possible.</p> 