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Information Update Concerning Coronavirus

Friday 13th March 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

The purpose of this letter is to continue to keep you up to date with the latest information concerning Coronavirus, particularly following the Government's announcement yesterday that the country has moved from the 'Contain' Phase to the 'Delay' Phase. We are writing to you with further specific advice and outline our emerging planning for the coming weeks and months.

Attendance

We have been receiving a small number of queries around attendance and whether parents should be sending their children to school. As a school we can only refer parents to government advice. According to that advice if students are well and have no symptoms they should come to school.

You will have heard one of the key changes in government advice announced yesterday is that anyone who develops a new, persistent cough and/or a high temperature should self-isolate for 7 days.

If a family member has self-isolated current government advice appears to be that if the child has no symptoms then they should attend school. However, if parents are in any way concerned about making this decision we would urge them to contact their medical provider (in most cases this will be the GP) for further advice. As we are sure you are aware the school is not in a position to give any medical advice. In this matter we are asking our parents/carers to act responsibly in taking any decisions on attendance based on advice given to them. However, we expect our parents to contact our admin team as normal to keep us informed.

We appreciate that parents may be concerned if they or their child have an underlying health issue that they should not attend school. If this is the case we urge parents to contact their healthcare provider for advice and let us know what they, as parents, think is the appropriate response.

Action we are taking now:

It is very difficult to predict what might happen but we are now taking steps in school to plan as best we can for future events and would appreciate your support and understanding.

Raising Awareness

In class time and through assemblies we will continue to give sensible advice and guidance to reassure the children, focussing on what we know about the Coronavirus at this stage. This will be delivered at an age-appropriate level.

Hand Sanitation

As you know from last week's letter we have instituted a regime of regular hand washing across the day by each class. The site team are ensuring that toilets and classrooms have a plentiful supply of soap and will be checking on this at regular points during the day.



We have been unable to procure hand sanitisers for each and every classroom as there is a shortage of them. However, the advice from PHE is that hand sanitisers should be used if soap and water aren't available as soap is more effective.

We are aware that some parents/carers have provided some of our older pupils with hand sanitiser that they have brought into school. We understand why some parents might be keen for their children to sanitise their hands more frequently themselves and we will continue to allow this. Nevertheless further to above PHE advice is that hand washing with soap and water is more effective and you know that we have implemented a regular regime to ensure this happens.

General Cleaning

As mentioned last week Alan, our site manager, is working with our cleaning staff to ensure that particular attention is paid to key areas. Our cleaners have been provided with appropriate cleaning solutions and are applying them to surfaces including door handles and bannisters.

School Trips

We are currently reviewing trips that are planned to take place in the UK and locally, in particular educational visits involving significant tube or bus travel into London. Government advice remains that these should still proceed, except for foreign trips (which do not relate to our school).

As mentioned we will be reviewing this very carefully as part of the risk assessment that is conducted for every visit.

Contingency planning

The government is planning for a range of future scenarios, one of which includes the possibility of school closure, but to date the government's preference is to keep schools open. This section of the letter sets out some of our emerging planning and work to prepare for this possibility.

School closure

As you will be aware, schools in other countries are being closed. Should this happen in the UK, please note the following:

Day to day communication

- Our key admin staff & Senior Leadership Team will have remote access to the parent and pupil database, and Katherine Still and Faye Papini can email/text message parents to keep you updated.
- This, and our website, will provide you with regular, up to date information. Please ensure that you check these regularly.
- Whilst our staff team will have limited access to their work platforms remotely, they will be able to access their emails for communications purposes.

Pupil learning

It is vital that if the school closes, pupils need to continue to learn at home. In a primary school setting there is no substitute for being in a classroom with a teacher and support staff, most especially for our younger children.

We are stepping up our planning to try to ensure 'remote learning' for our children in the eventuality of enforced school closure. The most likely vehicle for this will be through teachers using 'Purple Mash' (our remote learning digital platform) to set learning/work for their pupils. We are also considering use of email and other digital platforms available to us.

Pupil log ins for 'Purple Mash' have been issued, however we will be re-issuing these early next week. Please help us with this by ensuring you contact the School admin email if you/your child do not have this by end of Wednesday next week.

Ideally for 'remote learning' this would be using a lap top or PC, but we recognise that for many, access will be through their mobile phone or tablet. Please can parents/carers inform their child's classteacher or email school admin if they do not have access to the technology required, again as soon as possible, again by end of Wednesday next week. We will do our absolute best to support families overcome any such barriers.



In the event of an extended school closure, we would ask parents and carers to try and ensure conditions at home are conducive to allow for some quality learning time each day.

Free School Meals

In the event of school closure we will again follow Haringey/DfE advice in terms of how we try to maintain (if possible) provision of a meal to disadvantaged families entitled to free school meals (not Universal Infant Free School Meal Entitlement).

SATS

This is an area where we are still awaiting some more direction from the DfE and OFQual. As we hear more from the Department for Education we will update you.

Staff Absence

It may be possible that for a period of time, the school will be open but a higher than normal number of staff may be absent. Whilst the government have announced that they are intending to “relax” the law regarding maximum class size, in reality this has no practical meaning for our school. Rooms have a maximum capacity and for certain year groups there are required adult:pupil ratios. If high staff absence does become the case, we will do everything we can to remain open, be flexible in how we teach, & deploy staff, including agency supply staff if necessary. Nevertheless we must reserve the right to implement partial, or even whole school closure, if staffing levels were insufficient to ensure supervision and the health & safety of pupils. However, this would be a very last resort, and a decision not taken lightly.

Further advice for parents and carers

Please see the links below for any further information.

- www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public
- The Government Coronavirus Action Plan; a guide to what you can expect across the UK www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-action-plan

Our children may well become more concerned and anxious about Coronavirus following the Government’s decision yesterday, and the news from other countries. We all have a role to play in managing this. You know your child best but together we should:

- Do our best to ensure we protect our children’s mental and emotional well-being. Fear of this may well be even more infectious (and damaging) to them
- Do our utmost to follow the advice from the Government and Public Health England/NHS
- Not hide information from our children but stick to known facts, answering their questions in an age-appropriate open manner, but one that does not alarm.

Finally, this is clearly a difficult and unprecedented situation for us all and we are doing our very best to react to and pre-empt situations as they arise, so we are asking for your continued support as we take those decisions in order to protect the health and welfare of the our Bounds Green community

Yours sincerely

Will Wawn
Headteacher