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Latest Information Update Concerning Coronavirus – 18th 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 on Monday, as well as provide you with further School updates.

The latest guidance can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public>

The latest guidance for households with possible coronavirus:

If you or anyone in your household has one of the two main symptoms of the coronavirus (a new and continuous cough and/or temperature) then 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.

This is an important change from the guidance given in Friday's newsletter.

We also ask you to note the following guidance on social distancing announced yesterday particularly in relation to 'vulnerable' groups:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-social-distancing-and-for-vulnerable-people/guidance-on-social-distancing-for-everyone-in-the-uk-and-protecting-older-people-and-vulnerable-adults>

School Attendance

For the time being the Government has not made the decision to close schools. Therefore subject to the new, revised guidance issued yesterday, children are still expected and encouraged to attend school. That said, we understand that some of our families are anxious at present during these uncertain times. Please rest assured that we are sympathetic to your individual circumstances and any decisions you make.

School Changes/Updates

In light of the Government measures announced Monday evening, we have further reviewed our practice at School and have made the following changes:

- We have postponed or cancelled all school trips. Year 4's planned trip this week will not go ahead, neither will Year 2's planned trip next week.
- We made the decision to postpone Year 5 swimming to Arnos Grove pool (however the Pool themselves have had to cancel due to their own staffing issues), and any other involvement in sporting competitions.
- We are postponing the Reception & Nursery parents evenings planned for next week.
- We have made the decision to not hold school assemblies, including class assemblies, concerts and so on. Percussion lessons will not involve the use of the drums. We will consider whether Year 4 WCIT music lessons using trumpets/clarinets should continue.



- The 'Book Fair' this week will be cancelled with immediate effect. The upcoming 'Science Week' will be re-scheduled for July
- We will be liaising with the PTA about whether it is appropriate for Cake Sales and the 'silent disco' planned for Friday 3rd April to go ahead.
- We are cancelling all non-essential visitors to the school, including volunteers.
- Currently all enrichment/extra-curricular clubs will continue to go ahead (unless staffing issues arise)
- IPR meetings will be postponed until further notice.

Reassuring and Updating the Children

Children are naturally worried about the outbreak of the Coronavirus and are now voicing their concerns and questions. We have responded to this by introducing additional daily PSHE lessons at 3.00pm surrounding the issue

The PSHE team has put together a series of short lessons for teachers to use. These will include what the virus is, how it travels, how to keep viruses away, how to deal with the constant news updates, how to help each other, and so on. Children will also watch Newsround regularly and teachers will set up 'question/worry boxes' in their classrooms. We are hoping that all the above taught with age appropriate language will help alleviate our children's' concerns and worries, and clear up any misconceptions they may have.

Possible School Closure

Since Monday the school is facing significant staff absence issues resulting from the latest guidance, just as we have seen a significant drop in pupil attendance. As of today we have over 25 staff in differing roles necessarily absent resulting from the varied guidance, including a number of teachers, teaching assistants, lunchtime staff and extended care staff. We are doing our utmost to manage this and continue to remain open and offer the best quality education we can provide in the circumstances.

I would like to thank all our staff for their incredible efforts in adapting to ensure school continues to function as normally as possible.

I need to make you aware of a couple of particular staff absences and how we are covering:

- With Jess King absent, Earls Court class are going to be covered by Will for Maths & Reading each morning till 11.00am. Helen will cover the Writing session from 11.15-12.15pm. With Annie absent from today we will review how we cover Earls Court class during the afternoon.
- With Layla Mephram absent, Redbridge class will be covered by Vicky Copas.

Helen and I are reviewing the staffing situation on a continual basis. We will try our utmost to ensure we remain open. However modifications and adaptations may be necessary, such as combining classes (if numbers allow), providing an alternative curriculum if necessary and redeploying staff...however it is highly possible that we may have to consider closing the school to certain year groups as was forewarned in last Friday's newsletter. We will try to ensure you get as much notice as possible, but this may have to be the evening before.

Preparations

In terms of preparations for enforced whole school closure we are stepping up our readiness for 'remote learning' from home. Today all children in school from Year 1 to Year 6 will receive a letter which will include your child's 'Purple Mash' log-in as well as their 'MyMaths' log-in (with a letter about how this platform works). For children who are present today in Years 1 to 6 they will also be taking home a blank exercise book, more information on this to follow, as well as how this can be received by absent pupils. For children who are currently absent from school the letter will go in 1st class post today (Teachers who are in school will be setting a 'tester' learning activity on each platform by Thursday 6pm. Ideally we would like your child (preferably alongside you) to check you can access the activity, have a go at it, even very briefly, on Thursday evening so we can check the systems functionality.

We are looking at how we can meet the needs of families who may have issues with technology. This may mean we need to print hard copy packs for a few families that may need to be collected. A reminder that we asked parents to contact us if this applies to their family as soon as possible.

I need to make it clear that the staff are working extremely hard to keep the school open, with skeleton capacity. These remote learning plans are in the event of whole or partial school closure. As you will appreciate at present we are unable to provide these activities for those children/families who have made the decision, or have been forced, to make the decision to self-isolate. The teachers still in school are working at maximum capacity as it is. At present we do not have the capability or staff capacity to provide online lessons.

In terms of Early Years we are still exploring how we best support remote learning and will be sending more information on this by end of week.

More guidance on 'remote home learning' will come out in due course.

We would like to thank the many parents who have been in contact with us to express their gratitude for everything the School is doing to maintain normality. Your continuing support exemplifies what our school community is all about.

Once again thank you calm and considered response to the situation.

We will continue to keep you up to date with any news or information. Please ensure you keep an eye out for school text messages and school emails.

Keep safe, my best wishes

Will Wawn
Headteacher