

Tuesday 17th March 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

Parents Coronavirus Update – 17.03.20

Yesterday, the Government changed its guidance on containing the spread of Coronavirus. Here is the government's latest advice:

1. Ensure that if you or anyone in your household has either a high temperature **or** a new and continuous cough then you should **stay at home for 14 days.**
2. If possible **you should not go out,** even to buy food or essentials, other than for exercise, in which case, stay at a safe distance from others.
3. If necessary you should ask for help from others for your daily necessities, and if that is not possible then you should do what you can to limit your social contact when you leave the house to get supplies.
4. Even if you don't have symptoms, and if no one in your household has symptoms **stop non-essential contact with others, and stop all unnecessary travel.**
5. Work from home where you possibly can, and you should **avoid pubs, clubs, theatres and other such social venues.**
6. Only use the NHS when you really need to and go online rather than ringing NHS 111.
7. Advice about avoiding all necessary social contact is **particularly important for people over 70, for pregnant women and those with some health conditions.**
8. By this coming weekend those with the most serious health conditions should be largely shielded from social contact for around **12 weeks.**

As a result of this guidance, we have made some decisions which will hopefully continue to keep our children and families infection free.

Regrettably, we have taken the decision to cancel the following events until Easter:

- Year 3 and 5 swimming lessons – with immediate effect. This will be until further notice. We won't give any refunds at the moment as we expect to complete the swimming sessions later.
- Parents Evening on Thursday 26th March – This will be arranged for later in the year after Easter – it will be on a Thursday and all appointment times will be carried over unless requested otherwise.
- Team Read in EYFS and Lower School will no longer occur until further notice.
- The parents RSE Consultation on 1st April – this will be rearranged.
- Praise Assemblies with immediate effect
- All class assemblies including 3Hs assembly on Thursday
- Year 5 visit to Think Tank – this is in line with the Government advice on social venues. Again, this trip will be rearranged and so we will not carry out refunds at the moment, meaning that the trip can go ahead later. If it is eventually cancelled, we will of course provide a full refund.
- All EYFS Mother's Day events ☹️ - This is very sad and I am really sorry, but in line with the rest of our approach and most schools in Dudley and LLMAT.

In a nutshell, we are limiting the chances for our pupils to become infected through exposure and contact with people and places that we can't control ourselves. After school clubs such as dodgeball and football will continue as these clubs are run immediately after school and are run by school staff. Parents collecting will need to remain outside the main front doors whilst waiting to collect, please keep the entrance lobby clear.

We are being inundated with emails, phone calls and visits from parents asking for advice and for meetings. Ultimately, the advice on this letter is all that we can say. If you or anyone in your home shows any of the symptoms of Coronavirus, then you must all self-isolate for 14 days. This means not leaving the house at all if possible, as per the advice from HM Government above.

Some parents have asked whether the 2-week absence for self-isolation will result in EIS penalty fines. This will not be the case. If you notify us that the absence is for self-isolation due to Coronavirus symptoms, then this will be recorded as a 'Y code' on our registers and will not be considered as unauthorised – no fines will be issued. Your child's overall attendance % will still be affected and this will be shown on the school reports at the end of the year.

Please note that if you do not inform us of the cause of any absence or you are reported to us as not self-isolating then the codes will be changed to unauthorised and will be referred to EIS if appropriate. Other absences such as sickness and diarrhoea, colds and injuries will be treated as normal and will not require self-isolation.

Some parents are also requesting home learning packs for children in self-isolation, so I have taken advice on this from the Local Authority. In school, we have compiled 'Home Learning Packs' to use in the event of a national school closure. So we do have some work prepared. However, we can't use this for individual absences at this time as then we would not have anything left to use later. Remember – staff will need to be off work too in the event of closures. Therefore, at this time I would ask parents to use the free materials available on the internet from online companies such as **Twinkl**, **Classroom Secrets** and **The Reading Realm**. Click on the links below:

<https://thereadingrealm.co.uk/>

<https://classroomsecrets.co.uk/free-home-learning-packs/>

<https://www.twinkl.co.uk/resources/wellbeing-parents/school-closures-category-free-resources-parents/school-closures-free-resources-parents>

I would encourage parents of self-isolating pupils to download and use these resources for the moment. Our own packs will be uploaded to the website and school life app when necessary. If children are not actually poorly, whilst self-isolating, then they could be working on an awesome Easter Egg Competition entry – make it a family effort as it should be a fun and interesting little project to do together.

Please contact the school office in order to inform us of your child's absence for any reason – if self-isolating please state clearly that you are self-isolating due to symptoms being present within your household or that your child is displaying the symptoms themselves. If the absence is related to other issues please make this clear too, and return pupils to school ASAP. Remember – if your child is off school for self-isolation then you should also be at home and isolating for the same reasons - do not come to the school or leave the house unnecessarily.

If you are self-isolating, obviously, you should not see any elderly relatives over the age of 70 or with underlying health concerns as this could be extremely dangerous for them.

Please also note that the Government is briefing the public everyday at around 5.00pm and so guidance is likely to change frequently – we will keep you posted as well as we can but if the guidance changes after 5.00pm we may not be able to get messages out until the next day, therefore, please keep an eye on the news. We will always follow the Government guidance very carefully.

Please note that Netherbrook Rainbows, Brownies and Guides groups and Dance Depo have all been cancelled for the foreseeable future. Our breakfast and after school clubs run by Netherbrook Acorns are open as usual – these groups will let you know directly if anything changes regarding these arrangements. DPA woodwind lessons are now cancelled but strings and voice tuition will continue for the time being. The Year 6 residential visit to Kingswood in June is still scheduled to take place, however, if this changes and it needs to be cancelled in the future, parents will of course receive a full refund of all monies paid. Please keep to all existing instalment payment deadlines in the meantime.

I hope that this letter answers your concerns and questions. I appreciate how hard this is and it is likely to last for some time yet. We are working hard to keep our pupils safe, but I would like to thank you all again for your ongoing support and patience.

Yours sincerely

Mr P Rawlings

Headteacher