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School News

WHAT SHOULD WE BE DOING NEXT?

As you will have seen on the news the Coronavirus advice is changing quickly but we wanted to keep you informed as best we could. The school receives daily advice which, as of the 16.3.20, was:

Updated guidance for education settings on coronavirus (COVID-19)

The Department for Education and Public Health England have issued updated guidance for education settings on COVID-19. This guidance will assist staff in addressing COVID-19 in educational settings. This includes childcare, schools, further and higher educational institutions.

What you need to know:

- **staff, young people and children should stay at home if they are unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature to avoid spreading infection to others. Otherwise they should attend education or work as normal**
- **if staff, young people or children become unwell on site with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature they should be sent home**
- **clean and disinfect regularly touched objects and surfaces more often than usual using your standard cleaning products**
- **supervise young children to ensure they wash their hands for 20 seconds, more often than usual, with soap and water or hand sanitiser and catch coughs and sneezes in tissues**

Current advice remains in place: no education or children's social care setting should close in response to a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 case unless advised to do so by Public Health England.

The Chief Medical Officer has advised that the impact of closing schools on both children's education and on the workforce would be substantial, but the benefit to public health may not be. Decisions on future advice to education or children's social care settings will be taken based on the latest and best scientific evidence, which at this stage suggests children are a lower risk group.

What are we doing in school in the meantime?

Obviously, we are taking one day at a time and families that self-isolate will not be penalised for attendance and must follow the governments guidelines to protect everyone. In school we have also decided to:

- Cancel assemblies within the school (so no invites to a Friday Celebration Assembly)
- Stop all extra-curricular activities to reduce time in school
- Cancel all curriculum events involving visits or performances in school
- Modify the way we manage children at lunchtimes to increase supervision and hygiene
- Increase supplies of cleaning products and deploy our premise staff to deep clean as necessary
- Stop interschool sports and curriculum events
- Children and staff who we are aware of as having an underlying health concern (and who are deemed at risk) have been asked to stay at home and self-isolate as a precaution

We continue to talk to the children about washing hands and making sure they throw away tissues when they have coughed into them.

What will happen if the situation gets worse?

As you can imagine staff are also having to follow the advice given by the government and may have to self-isolate. If we become short of teachers because of the virus outbreak, we will do everything we can to ensure children are in a safe environment. **However, this means that classes may have to be merged and teachers redeployed to make sure the children in school continue to receive lessons- possibly in mixed-age classes.** The teachers will remain professional and do the best we can for all the children.

If the situation becomes critical, a year group may be asked not to come to school or the school may need to be shut completely.

We will communicate this through Parent Mail and on the News page of the school web site.

We understand the difficulties this may cause parents, but it is essential to think of contingencies.

What happens if my child must be at home?

We are preparing information to send out on Parent Mail by Friday 20th March. This will include helpful advice on work you can do at home and websites etc you can access. Again, we will also attach these ideas to the Year Group pages of the school website.

Keep up to date

Please keep up to date with the latest news and advice and follow this carefully. The school will be sending out further information as it becomes available.

As I am sure you will appreciate, we are facing a unique set of circumstances in which we need to ensure the health of our most vulnerable in this testing time.

Tony Berwick