

St. Mark's Church of England Primary School



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13th March 2020

Dear Parent,

School response to COVID-19 (coronavirus)

Cases of coronavirus are predicted to increase. This means the likelihood of a pupil, parent or member of staff testing positive or being in contact with a confirmed case and being advised to self-isolate is increasing. The current situation is that if there is a confirmed case at school Public Health England (PHE) will advise on the appropriate and proportionate steps to take.

In the scenario of a pupil or staff member self-isolating due to contact with a confirmed case, the current national advice is that schools should remain open.

We are not aware of any cases that directly affect our school community currently. Staff, parents, carers and pupils must not come into school if they have any of the following symptoms:

- a high temperature
- a new continuous cough

In such a situation, the current advice from <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/> is as follows:

- Do not go to a GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital.
- You do not need to contact 111 to tell them you're staying at home.
- Read the current Government advice about staying at home (available from school)

Urgent advice: use the NHS 111 online coronavirus service if:

- you feel you cannot cope with your symptoms at home
- your condition gets worse
- your symptoms do not get better after 7 days

If any of these symptoms are present or you are worried in any way that you or your child may have contracted coronavirus you should contact NHS 111 immediately to seek advice. Please then notify the school about the action you have been asked to take.

Having carefully considered the current situation, we are going to take the following measures with immediate effect:

1. Trips, visits and sporting fixtures will be assessed on an individual basis. It is important to note that a decision may need to be made at short notice.
2. Visitors will be asked to wash their hands.
3. We would ask you to consider carefully any travel arrangements you might be planning over the Easter holidays. Please be aware that the guidance about this, which can be found on the FCO website, frequently changes but it could mean that a period of self-isolation might be necessary on your return. Please notify us immediately at the start of the Summer term if this is the case.

In addition to these actions, we have put in place a number of measures with pupils. This includes briefing them in class and assemblies, putting notices and signage up around the school to encourage good hygiene and regularly checking the soap dispensers to ensure that there is always an adequate supply.

We will continue to monitor the coronavirus situation closely and follow the advice from Public Health England and the Department for Education. The Department for Education's advice page for schools can be found using the link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19>

The most important advice is to limit the spread of the virus. Health-care professionals stress the importance of hygiene and hand washing. They recommend:

- washing hands often with soap and water
- **Catch it, Bin it, Kill it:** covering a cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throwing the tissue in a bin; if no tissues are available then cough or sneeze into the elbow of a sleeve
- people who feel unwell should stay at home

Students, staff and visitors should wash their hands:

- after using public transport
- before leaving home and on arrival at school
- after using the toilet
- after breaks and sporting activities
- before eating any food, including snacks

We will continue to highlight this important advice to staff and pupils. We will contact you immediately with any new arrangements that may have to be put in place if circumstances do change in any way.

As some parents have asked, I can make clear that my current absence has been due to a health issue that is completely unrelated to the coronavirus. I am recovering well and hope to return to school next week !

I am sure that by working together and acting on the advice given we can help to keep our children and families safe and well.

Yours sincerely

Mr P Barfoot
Headteacher

