

Wednesday 18th March 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

Coronavirus Update: 18th March 2020

Following the most recent government advice and information, I want to reassure you that at Park Road we are taking all of the necessary steps to protect our community. Following a meeting with the SLT and Governing Body last night, I feel it is important to share with you the plans we have made so far for the school between now and the end of this term on Thursday 26th March. This letter aims to prepare you for any changes that the school may have to consider in the coming days and weeks ahead and includes what we expect from our parents and families to help make sure that our school community keeps safe and calm.

It's a long read so please ensure that you read to the end of this communication!

Whilst you have already had some of the following information I thought I would take the opportunity to reiterate the current situation as of Wednesday 18th March 2020

The Government guidance now includes a greater emphasis on **family isolation**.

Anyone with a 'new continuous' cough and/ or a high temperature is advised to self-isolate.

If you live alone and you have symptoms of coronavirus illness (COVID-19), however mild, stay at home for **7 days** from when your symptoms started.

If you live with others and **you or one of them** have symptoms of coronavirus, 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.

Essentially, we have been directed to send home any child or adult with a high temperature or new persistent cough. If this should happen, the advice is that family isolation should then follow for a period of 14 days, the period of isolation will be classed as an authorised absence from school.

Please **DO NOT** go to a GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital. You **DO NOT** need to contact 111 to tell them you are staying at home. Testing for coronavirus is not needed if you are staying at home.

Please make sure you keep to the advice that the Government have issued and let us know if your child is absent from school. If your child has a pre-existing medical condition which makes them more vulnerable to the Covid-19 virus, we would suggest that you contact your paediatrician or health team lead for specific advice. Please note that we are unable to offer any medical advice and we can only refer you back to the details in this letter.

Further information can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

Currently the **school remains open** and this is the official guidance we've been given. I will try my very best to stay open for as long as we can whilst maintaining a safe environment for the children and staff.

Staff Absence

Isolation may affect children, parents and staff and therefore could affect the day-to-day running of the school. If or when we find ourselves in this situation, the following actions may be taken:

- ✿ Your child may have a different teacher / teaching assistant to support their learning.
- ✿ Putting classes together with shared staff.
- ✿ Dividing classes between teachers.
- ✿ Full or partial closure of the school (please keep reading for more information)

In previous emails, I have outlined the actions we are already taking to increase hygiene and social distancing, including school trips and keeping adults out of school. Information has already been given to the children regarding the importance of handwashing and increased hygiene techniques at this time. Our premises are also being regularly cleaned.

I am also now requesting that parents do not come on to the school site. Please phone or email us with queries. This includes parents who come into school to help with readers/library.

What happens if we have to close the school?

Despite the announcement that schools will remain open for the time being, we are doing what we must, including preparing for a national closure. We will only close if we are either officially advised to do so or if staffing levels are too low to maintain safe ratios.

If we do get to this point and if we do not have staff available, I have made the difficult decision to put into place a staged closure. The Governors and I have agreed that we will prioritise keeping pupils living with parents/ carers who work in the emergency services/ NHS in school.

Phased Closure of the School

In the first instance, we would consider closing the Nursery and Reception Classes and keeping all other classes open (and children of NHS workers).

The rationale behind this is that a) some of these pupils are not statutory school age. b) EYFS staffing ratios are higher/stricter than other classes c) it will be easier for us to help children 'catch up' lower down the school than in the upper junior; who are about to move to secondary school/do entrance exams next year (in making all decisions, I am thinking a lot longer ahead!)

In the second instance, i.e. if staffing numbers reduce further we will then close to the infant classes in year 1 and year 2. School will be open to juniors (and children of NHS workers)

Following this it will be a full school closure.

I realise that this isn't ideal but I hope you can appreciate that I am trying to keep as much of school open as possible.

In any of these cases, we will:

- ✿ Alert parents to closure, via an email, a push notification on the app and a post on the school's website.
- ✿ We will provide regular updates and we will let parents know when the school will be reopened in the same way as closure.
- ✿ If an announcement of national school closures is made by the Government via the media, it is likely that some parents may be notified before the school is. However, we would be grateful if parents do not call the school at that time to ask for further information. We will need to use all our resources to prepare for closure and information will be sent through emails, app notifications and the school website.

Please keep in mind that we are only sending out this information to help the school community prepare.



I have shared our current and ever changing action plan and risk assessment with the staff team and they have been planning home learning for the children, should we have to close. Work will be available if your child needs to self-isolate before a closure.

Home learning during school closure:

When closure or pupil self-isolation is necessary, we have agreed that the following remote learning should take place.

We will use existing online channels of communication to provide work for children. Children will receive a home learning pack which will include plain paper, lined paper, squared paper and coloured sugar paper. This will be sent home on Thursday (for children who are self-isolating we will drop it off through the letter box or post it). Activities will include:

- ✚ Its Learning: Teachers will provide a range of online and printable activities for children across all subject areas, including English and maths. Children will need to log in and go to their class page. The activities can be done online or using paper. There may also be times when children can 'hand in' work online using the assignment tool.
- ✚ Teachers will check daily for completed tasks and set new tasks as appropriate to their learning. We do need to consider cases where teachers become unwell and cannot work. In such cases, a member of staff will inform parents and pupils will you be advised to do what you can.
- ✚ There is an expectation that children will complete an English activity, a maths activity and a 'topic' lesson daily (not of any specified length). There will also be an expectation for daily reading. Teachers will plan and upload these daily activities.
- ✚ Class dojo – not all classes use Class dojo but where it is used by teachers, it will be used an additional way to communicate with children and parents about remote learning.
- ✚ Pupils will bring extra reading books home including texts that are used in the summer term.
- ✚ Teachers will set up a research project for their year group that children can compete at home. We are fortunate that school is 80 years old and so every year is going to research their own decade. Every child will be expected to create a fantastic project about their given decade. They will need to use the internet to research but after this, children can do this on paper so it relies less on IT systems at home (although if desired the project can be done on a computer).
- ✚ Other Computer programmes will be used to support the work set on Its Learning. Activities we be available on: Education City, Reading Eggs, SPAG.com, Mathletics (for Y6), SumDog, Busy Things (for EYFS), TimesTables Rock Stars.
- ✚ Other ways of learning are being looked at and at some point I will share with parents, lists of other websites that you can access. Please bear with us – our priority right now is get our basic remote learning sorted first.
- ✚ There is an expectation that teachers will be in regular contact with each child, how we do this is still being worked out but it could be via a telephone call or via video links etc. Again, we'll update you how we are going to do this as soon as we know.
- ✚ We will provide home learning for the duration of any full school closure leading up to the Easter break. However, please note that work will **not** be posted during the Easter holiday.



Where pupils have parents who work and will be using home laptops etc. and therefore do not have access to their own equipment, we will ask parents and pupils to be flexible in their learning – doing it at times that suit each family situation. We will also take this into consideration when assessing the degree to which pupils have completed their remote learning tasks. I think FLEXIBILITY will be the key to home learning & working.

I appreciate that some of you will not be looking forward to this home learning element and may struggle to motivate your children! Before this week is out I will go round every class and chat with the children about how I want them to learn and how important it is. If at any point you are really struggling please let me know and I will do all I can to help your situation

During a period of closure, all school email addresses will be monitored. We are happy to help where we can with specific questions you may have linked to your child. However, do bear in mind that the majority of our staff team have young families or dependants so we will do our very best to balance supporting our school community as well as our own family's needs.

I have updated the school website and created a page on the Coronavirus under the tab, 'Our School', 'COVID-19'. I will use this page to store relevant useful information.

Please consult the:

- ✿ School office, if you have any questions about our response to this issue. We politely ask that parents don't call school to ask our advice whether or not to bring your child in, we aren't healthcare professionals and can't make that decision.
- ✿ NHS, if you want to know more about the symptoms of coronavirus. If you think you or your child may have the symptoms, use NHS 111 online if at all possible before calling 111.
- ✿ Department for Education's coronavirus helpline: 0800 046 8687, if you have any questions about the government's response to coronavirus in relation to schools.
- ✿ Government's travel advice, if you want to know whether any upcoming trip or holiday you're taking abroad should go ahead.

I would like to finish by thanking you all for your continued support of the staff team during this unprecedented time. It is hugely appreciated. It is a challenging time for us all, and I know that you are worried about the impact this might have on our community. Please rest assured that we are doing all that we can to keep your child's education as consistent as possible. It is so important that we keep each other safe and stay positive. Whatever challenges we may face in the next week or so, I feel confident that we will meet these together, utilising our unique Park Road family spirit.

With very best wishes,

C Walmsley

Mrs C Walmsley
Headteacher

