

13th March 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

Covid-19 Contingency Plan

To continue to keep you up to date with the latest information concerning Coronavirus, we are writing to you with further specific advice and our plans for the coming weeks and months.

Yesterday the Government updated its advice to delay the spread of the virus. They now advise the following:

Stay at home for 7 days if you have either:

- a high temperature
- a new continuous cough

This will help to protect others in your community while you are infectious.

These symptoms do not necessarily mean an individual has COVID-19. The symptoms are also similar to other illnesses that are much more common, such as cold and flu. Our advice is that if you are worried about your symptoms or those of your child; please call NHS 111 for advice and guidance.

It is very difficult to predict what might happen but we have taken steps in school to plan as best we can for future events and would appreciate your support and understanding. Our Teams will be unable to give daily guidance over the telephone or email as our main aim is to ensure smooth and normal running of the school for as long as possible.

We are writing to reassure you that the school is acutely aware of the increase in cases of coronavirus across Europe and the UK. We are continuing to monitor the situation, and are following the advice of Public Health England (PHE) and the local authority (LA) to safeguard the health of our community, including students and staff.

The most up-to-date advice and information for the public can be found at:
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-information-for-the-public>

We have a plan ready to minimise the disruption to teaching and learning if the Coronavirus creates staff or student absence in the coming weeks and this includes planning for a full school closure.

We have many ways in which we can support teaching and learning from home which are covered in this letter.

We have also decided to make some adjustments to our normal school routines for the rest of this term in order to minimise and manage the risk of infection, both to our school community and, as importantly, to those close to us who may be particularly vulnerable to the virus.

The steps we are taking aim to do the following: minimise the number of large gatherings of people where infection can be more easily spread; manage visitors to the school site, in particular those whose recent movement cannot be known; and assess risk each day to ensure that if any activity raises the level of risk to our community, alternatives or adjustments are immediately considered.

SENSIBLE AND PROPORTIONATE ADJUSTMENTS

School Trips

The following overseas trips are planned:

- 16th March – Battlefields - **cancelled**
- 3rd April – Holland football tour – **under review**
- 10th July – Boulogne day trip
- 23rd August - France water sports

Current Guidance advises that overseas school trips do not go ahead, please see

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/travel-advice-novel-coronavirus>

We will continue to advise the parents/carers of all students going on these trips as we receive more information. Please note that we will follow Foreign Office (FCO) and DfE advice. This will ensure that insurances are valid and refunds are payable when necessary.

Public examinations

The most current update from OFQUAL is clear that the exam season remains secure and we, therefore, continue to prepare our students for their GCSEs as normal.

Events

It is possible that some events may be cancelled, however we are mindful that there are a very small number of events this term for which very considerable preparation and effort have already been invested. It is our hope that - with some simple risk management measures - we can still enable these to take place. Changes will be confirmed as soon as possible.

Basic hygiene advice

Tutors have stressed to students that the most effective way of minimising the risk of infection remains effective hand-washing. We have emphasised to all staff that we should all continue to do this and to impress upon the students the significance of doing so. Posters have been put up around school drawing attention to the importance of personal hygiene and this message is being consistently reinforced by teachers.

Precautionary planning for school closure

The government reiterated that it may implement school closures should the coronavirus outbreak develop as it has in Italy. Spain has also announced similar measures. We have well advanced contingency plans for students to be able to work from home and will endeavour to offer a meaningful programme of learning, marking and feedback.

As you will expect, there are likely to be further changes to our approach during the coming days and weeks. We are very grateful for your support, understanding and help in managing this issue as it develops.

CONTINGENCY PLANNING

The government is planning for a range of future scenarios, one of which includes the possibility of a temporary school closure but to date the government's preference is to keep schools open, given the knock on effect of parents/carers having to take time off. This section of the letter sets out some of our plans if we do have to close.

School Closure

As you will be aware, schools in Italy were closed last week for two weeks with no prior notice given. Should this happen to us, please note the following:

Day to day communication

- As a school we will communicate, as always, via SchoolComms to ensure you are kept up-to-date with changes if we do close
- We will also try to ensure our website has the latest announcements on the home screen for you to look at. Please ensure that you check this regularly
- Regarding students' progress and work; parents/carers can be kept up-to-date using SchoolComms
- Our staff will have the ability to access certain aspects of their work from home and we will do our best to ensure that the learning of students has minimal disruption

Student Learning

It is vital that if the school closes, students should continue to study at home. Whilst there is no substitute for being in a classroom with a teacher, we will set work regularly, electronically through Show My Homework. Parents/carers can help us now by doing the following:

- Making sure your child has access to their school email account from home and access to Show My Homework.
- Making sure your child has somewhere quiet to work. In the event of an extended school closure, we would ask parents and carers to try and ensure conditions at home are conducive to allow four hours of quality work each day. Teachers will be available on email to reply to any queries

Staff Absence

It is possible that for a period of time, the school will be open but a higher than normal number of staff may be absent. Whilst the government are "relaxing" the law regarding maximum class size, in reality this has no practical meaning for secondary schools. Rooms have a maximum capacity and students are taught by subject specialists. If high staff absence does become the case, we will do everything we can to remain open, but we will prioritise our exam classes and we reserve the right to open partially for other year groups. However, this would be a last resort.

Further advice for parents

This is a fast moving situation and at the time of writing this letter, the risk level is deemed low to moderate, although for parents/carers wishing to keep up to date with the latest situation, the following links may be helpful:

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

The Government Coronavirus Action Plan; a guide to what you can expect across the UK - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-action-plan>

Mental Health & Well Being

Students may well become more concerned about Coronavirus as the government considers moving from the *contain* phase to the *delay* phase. We all have a role to play in managing this. You know your child best but together we should:

- Do our best not to sensationalise or overdramatise this issue
- Steer students away from some of the newspapers and social media coverage
- Not hide information from students but stick to known facts
- Not pass our own concerns or stresses to our children/students

The risk to young people who are not suffering from underlying health conditions is very low. There will be a small number of students, staff and your own family members with suppressed immune systems, so please do take advice from NHS 111 and the government websites.

Finally, this is clearly a difficult and unprecedented situation for us all and we are doing our very best to react to and pre-empt situations as they arise, so we are asking for your continued support as we take those decisions in order to protect the health and welfare of the Kings community.

Yours sincerely



Mrs J. Luhman
Headteacher