

6<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian,

### **Coronavirus - COVID-19 - Information for Students, Parents and Carers**

You will be aware already via the media regarding the new strain of coronavirus, which has been named COVID-19.

We continue to assess the risk and established mitigation measures based on the expert advice from the Department for Education, the NHS, Public Health England and the National Institute of Clinical Excellence.

Our risk assessment and control measures apply to reduce the spread of all types of respiratory viruses, including the common cold and influenza. The increased risk in the case of the novel COVID-19 strain is that information is limited and vaccination and treatment pathways have yet to be identified, resulting in a specific risk when compared with established strains of respiratory viruses.

If you have been abroad to an area that has been affected (Category 1 or 2) we would very much appreciate you informing us. The current advice is:

**Category 1:** Travellers should self-isolate, even if asymptomatic, and use the 111 online coronavirus service to find out what to do next. Go home or to your destination and then self-isolate.

**Category 2:** Travellers do not need to undertake any special measures, but if they develop symptoms they should self-isolate and call NHS 111.

A key strand of mitigation is to help us educate your child in being rigorous in maintaining good standards of personal hygiene. The following advice will be shared in school, but you may wish to re-emphasise the importance. The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to the virus and there are general principles anyone can follow to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses, including:

- washing your hands often - with soap and water, or use alcohol sanitiser if hand washing facilities are not available - this is particularly important after taking public transport;
- covering your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throwing the tissue in a bin, or where tissues are not available, coughing/sneezing into the inside of your elbow (rather than into your hands);

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- students, staff and visitors should wash their hands:
  - before leaving home;
  - on arrival at school;
  - after using the toilet;
  - after breaks and sporting activities;
  - before food preparation;
  - before eating any food, including snacks;
  - before leaving school.
- people who feel unwell should stay at home and should not attend work or any education or childcare setting;
- use hand sanitiser that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available;
- avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands;
- avoid close contact with people who are unwell;
- clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

We have also been advised that:

- if you are worried about your symptoms or those of a child or colleague, please call NHS 111 - do not go directly to your GP or other healthcare environment;
- facemasks for the general public, students or staff are not recommended to protect from infection as there is no evidence of benefit from their use outside healthcare environments.

From all of the expert advice we have been given, there is no need for panic or alarm, but I am sure you will appreciate that it is sensible for us to take precautions, remain vigilant and be prepared in order to safeguard our learning community.

Yours sincerely,



James O'Connell  
Principal