

18 March 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

COVID-19

I am writing to you again with an update on our response to the spread of COVID-19.

I am sure you are aware that guidance from the UK government has now changed:

- Anyone with a new continuous cough or high temperature should stay at home for 14 days, as should all members of that household.
- Everyone should minimise social mixing in the community (being in school is not defined under government guidance as social mixing).
- The government is expected by the end of the week to direct all “at risk” people to stay at home for a period of 12 weeks. At risk people include everyone over 70, pregnant women and anyone with a serious *underlying health condition*.

School attendance

Guidance is available here on what the government classes as *underlying health conditions*:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-social-distancing-and-for-vulnerable-people>

I would ask you to refer to this guidance in deciding whether your child should attend school. I recognise fully these are difficult decisions and we support you in thinking about what is best for your family.

School closures

Schools have still **not** been directed to close at this point; all decisions about school closures remain with our Headteachers. For as long as it remains part of the government’s strategy to keep schools open, we will do our very best to achieve that each day.

However, the starting point for a decision to remain open is based entirely on whether a school has enough staff on site to keep children safe. As more of our colleagues are required to stay at home either because they have symptoms, a family member has symptoms or because they are in a vulnerable category, we have fewer staff available.

As a consequence it is with great reluctance that some of our schools are already having to make difficult decisions about whether to close or partially close. Such decisions are always made in consultation with myself.

In the event of closure or partial closure our schools will make every effort to provide distance learning materials for pupils/students as soon as possible, but please bear with us.

You may also see changes in how your child's school operates during this period, including pupils/students not having their usual teachers or being in their usual teaching groups.

We will continue to work hard to communicate clearly with you and give as much notice of any closures as soon as we are able.

Yours faithfully

Mr M Sibley
Chief Education Officer