

Dear Parent /Carers,

Given the current situation across the country regarding coronavirus (COVID-19), I wanted to update you on our plans for the coming weeks. I am sure you will understand, it is hard to predict what the impact on schools might be, but we have taken steps to plan as best as we can for future events. As always, your support and understanding whilst we navigate our way through this situation is greatly appreciated.

Action we are taking now

Awareness in school

In classes pupils have been advised about the importance of washing hands regularly and using tissues when coughing and sneezing. This was based on NHS and government advice and posters reinforcing this advice are now displayed around the school.

Hand washing

As you are aware, there is currently a global shortage of hand sanitiser. We are asking pupils thoroughly wash their hands with soap at break times and at lunchtime and at other points throughout the day. This will be supervised washing.

Toilets

Given the need for frequent handwashing, toilets will be accessible throughout the day. Although teachers will still need to authorise pupils to go and wash their hands during lessons to minimise disruption to learning.

General Cleaning

We are prioritising certain areas of the building; the surfaces that people touch frequently such as sinks, toilets and door handles.

Contingency Planning

Communication

As the path of the Coronavirus outbreak develops, we will be following advice from the Department for Education and the Government. This might, at some point, involve temporarily closing the school on a full/partial basis. If this happens, please note:

- We have remote access to the parent and pupil database and can send text messages/ emails
- We can update our school website remotely and you should check this daily in the event of closure.

Pupil Learning

Whilst there is no substitute for being in a classroom with a teacher and teaching assistants, we will set regular work electronically via Show My Homework website should the school close. If we get notice of closure, then we will send pupils home with the books and materials we think they may need.

You can help us by doing the following:

- Making sure your child has access to the internet from home. Ideally this will be on a home computer, laptop or tablet although we recognise that some pupils might not have access to these and may only be able to access via a smartphone.
- Making sure your child has somewhere quiet to work, in the event of an extended closure.

School Trips and school events

We are monitoring official advice and will communicate with parents/carers on a case by case basis should this become necessary.

Please remember that short-notice changes to diary events may be due to circumstances beyond the school's control. We will always endeavour to do this in a timely manner. School will be following the day to day guidance by the Government/Department for Education.

National examinations

Any impact on national tests for GCSE will affect the whole country, we will therefore follow any official guidance and keep parents/carers updated.

Staff Absence

It is possible that the school may need to operate as normal but with a number of staff absences. Government advice regarding Covid-19 has been to 'relax' the law concerning class sizes which may mean classes could be amalgamated. We will only do this in extreme cases and will endeavour to keep school running as normal.

Please be aware that staff will have to follow advice from Public Health England about attending work if they have been in contact with cases of Coronavirus and may not be able to attend work for a short period even though they want to do so.

Advice regarding Attendance & Absence

There are a number of various scenarios under which a pupil could be absent from school linked to the Coronavirus. School will follow Government guidance on each individual case.

Revision Clubs and Enrichment clubs

For the moment the clubs will continue as normal however in the event of high staff absences there is a possibility that the sessions may be cancelled. Parent/carers will be informed as soon as a decision is made.

Parent Consultation Day

We had planned to hold parent consultation day on Friday 27th March but given the current situation, we have decided to postpone parents evening until after the Easter holidays. We will send out a separate letter and text message with details on new dates and times.

As always, if you have any concerns, please contact the school office and your child's class teacher will call you back.

Further Information and Avoiding Anxiety

The Government and the NHS have made lots of advice about Coronavirus (also called Covid-19) available on their websites. I recommend that you look to those sources of information for updates and news about the virus and avoid listening to rumours on social media.

Clearly this is a developing situation and, at the time of writing, the risk to health and the smooth running of the school is deemed low to moderate. However, with your support we want to minimise pupils worries regarding this virus.

Together we should:

- Do our best not to sensationalise or over dramatise the issue.
- Steer pupils away from some of the news coverage and social media channels.
- Stick to known facts rather than speculation.

We have put together a list of websites at the bottom of this letter that are regularly updated with advice for parents and schools.

****NOTE****

- Please can we also ask that all your contact details are up to date in the school office. If you have recently changed your contact numbers or emails or you wish to add an email address to a contact already held on our files, please email any changes to enquiries@coalclough.org or you can contact the school office.
- Please do not ring school for coronavirus information as all we can quote is what the Government and Public Health England have released (see below links).
- As a precautionary measure please can we ask that parents/carers put any money coming into school in an envelope or money bag clearly labelled with their child's name and class.

It is possible that our resources may be stretched for some time over the next few weeks and together we will work through the current situation. Please be assured any decisions We make as a school will protect you, your child and their education.

Thank you for your continued support.

Kind regards

H. Clarke (Head Teacher)

Information for schools re COVID-19

Useful resources and information

Coronavirus guidance

What advice to give to individuals who have travelled to specified countries and areas within the last 14 days. The poster accompanies the guidance and should be downloaded, printed and displayed in all education settings. It is aimed at parents, carers, students, Headteacher's, teaching and support team staff.

You can access the guidance and poster here:

- https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/869250/Coronavirus_advice_for_educational_settings_poster.pdf

You can find further information on the Government response here:

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/coronavirus-covid-19-uk-government-response>
- NHS advice – <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>
- Lancashire County Council Information - <https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/your-health-and-wellbeing/coronavirus/>

DfE Coronavirus helpline

The Department for Education has set up a Coronavirus helpline to answer questions about COVID-19 related to education.

Staff, parents and young people can contact the helpline as follows:

Phone: 0800 046 8687

Email: DfE.coronavirushelpline@education.gov.uk

Opening hours: 8am to 6pm (Monday to Friday)

Government Coronavirus action plan

The Government Coronavirus action plan sets out what the UK as a whole has done to tackle the Coronavirus (COVID-19), and what it plans to do next.

The action plan can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-action-plan>

Latest Department for Education information can be found here:

<https://twitter.com/educationgovuk>

<https://www.facebook.com/educationgovuk>