



Sunday, 15 March 2020

Dear Parent \ Carer

You have probably seen the news that the government announced some new measures to deal with COVID-19 and also a change to its overall response, moving from the 'contain' to the 'delay' phase of its plan. As before, the advice remains that effective hand hygiene and using a tissue when coughing or sneezing are some of the most effective ways in which we can help reduce the spread of the virus. The school is continuing to do all that it can to minimise the spread with good hygiene and is following all the advice from Public Health and Herts County Council and as such we believe there is no additional risk to students and staff.

### **Self-isolation and staying at home**

As you know the government has widened their advice on who should self-isolate to include those that have coronavirus like symptoms - a new or continuous cough or a high temperature, however mild - should stay at home for at least 7 days to protect others and help slow the spread of the disease. All our staff will be expected to follow this advice, and we ask you to ensure that your children do so too. If your children are absent from school because they are ill, please continue to call the school every day on 01920 411200 or e-mail us via [reportanabsence@chauncy.org.uk](mailto:reportanabsence@chauncy.org.uk)

In certain circumstances you may be advised by medical professionals to keep your child at home even if they are not unwell. If this is the case, please let us know and we will support your decision.

I understand that parents are concerned about the risk of their children catching coronavirus and that some may wish to keep children at home even though they have not had any medical advice to do so. However, we cannot agree to a child's absence for that reason alone. All children who are well enough to come to school are expected to continue attending as normal unless advised otherwise by Public Health England.

### **School Trips**

There has been updated guidance on school trips and the government has advised that planned school trips outside the UK should not go ahead. Have had no overseas trips planned in the remainder of the academic year. The government advice is that school trips within the UK can at present go ahead safely. As the COVID-19 situation in the UK is changing rapidly we will review the risk assessment for each trip before it goes ahead.

### **The possibility of school closure**

Some parents have asked whether we could choose to close the school now. If we are ordered to close the school by Public Health England, because there is a risk to children/students and staff we will do. If the government make a decision to close all schools we will do so, otherwise our intention is to stay open and operate as normal. The Government has made it clear it expects schools to remain open unless public health advice has been given to close. This is based on the clear advice from the Chief Scientific Adviser to the Government, Sir Patrick Vallance, on how best to manage this epidemic. We are sure that you will be supportive of this.

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We are however preparing in case the school closes and we are looking at ways for managing a remote curriculum and contingency planning is underway regarding public examinations. We recognise that if closure is necessary this will have significant implications for many of our families with issues ranging from the loss of free school means to problems for families finding suitable childcare.

**Keeping informed**

Obviously, we will continue to provide updates as the situation continues to develop and would ask that you inform the school of any contact your family may have had with a person with symptoms or who has tested positive.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,

**Steve Walton (Deputy Headteacher)**