

17 March 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

I write to provide a further update on the coronavirus and advice that has been given to schools. We are doing our level best to communicate with parents, carers and the entire school community as much as possible. You will appreciate that the media and press are reporting that there are pressures on all schools, however, please rest assured that we communicate with senior colleagues across Pontefract Academies Trust on a daily basis with the health and safety of pupils and staff at the top of the agenda.

All schools in the Trust continue to follow government advice in managing the coronavirus. You will be aware that current government guidelines are that schools should remain open. Please understand that the government provides daily advice to schools and as you would expect, we have been strictly following this. Please be assured that our schools will update parents and carers of any changes, and in these uncertain times we can only communicate as and when we know more information.

We have put in place some additional measures to protect the health of pupils and staff. These measures will be reviewed regularly and be in place for only as long as is necessary.

- Assemblies will be cancelled for the remainder of this term. This includes class assemblies when we would normally invite families to attend.
- Visits to the schools by both members of the public and parents will be strictly by appointment only. Wherever possible, parental meetings will take place over the telephone.
- Please do not come into the school reception areas unless necessary. Please communicate via telephone instead.
- All domestic trips planned for the remainder of this half term that involve our pupils coming into contact with pupils from other schools will be cancelled or postponed.
- Sports fixtures against other schools will be postponed until after Easter, at the earliest.
- We hope to maintain our food deliveries and are currently exploring if there is a way of supporting families who receive Free School Meals should we be asked to close.
- Breakfast club and after school clubs will continue as normal.

Please help us to reinforce the following advice which we are insisting upon in school:

- Ensure that your child washes their hands regularly with soap and water, and before they leave for school.
- Remind them to wash their hands when they arrive at school with soap and water.
- Remind them to wash their hands when they return from school using soap and water.
- Encourage your child not to share water bottles or any other food/drink items with other pupils. Please ensure that water bottles are thoroughly washed with hot, soapy water daily.
- Avoid any physical contact during social times (high 5s, handshakes, contact games and embraces with friends).
- Use cutlery when eating meals to avoid hand-to-mouth contact wherever possible.
- Wherever possible please provide your child with clean clothes every day to avoid the spread of and contact with germs.

Public Health England have announced new guidance for people with confirmed or possible infection. This means that households where a person has a new continuous cough and/or high temperature should self-isolate for 14 days.

The full guidance which explains the number of days after which to stop self-isolation is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance>. If your child develops such symptoms and needs to remain at home, then please let us know and keep us updated.

Obviously, these prevention measures have led to a significant increase in the hand washing facilities in our schools. Monitoring checks of these facilities have been increased across the schools but if a pupil discovers a soap dispenser which is empty or broken we would encourage them to report it to a member of staff so this can be rectified promptly as we recognise these facilities are a key part of the prevention measures.

Last week the Department for Education launched a new helpline to answer questions about coronavirus related to education. Staff, parents and pupils can contact the helpline as follows:

**Phone: 0800 046 8687**

**Email: [DfE.coronavirushelpline@education.gov.uk](mailto:DfE.coronavirushelpline@education.gov.uk)**

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

If you require any further information the government have pointed us towards the following in their regular updates:

- Updates on COVID-19: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>
- Guidance for educational settings: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19>
- Travel advice for those travelling and living overseas: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/travel-advice-novel-coronavirus>
- Government action plan: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-action-plan>
- Hand hygiene messages: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/public-information-campaign-focuses-on-handwashing>
- Latest DfE information: <https://twitter.com/educationgovuk> and <https://www.facebook.com/educationgovuk/>

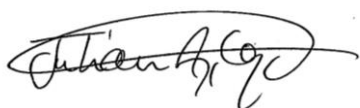
As was mentioned in yesterday's communication, the Department for Education update to schools included the following information with regards to the forthcoming exam series. We will provide further updates and information, as and when we know more.

"We recognise that students, parents, schools and colleges will be concerned about the possible impact of coronavirus on the 2020 summer exam series. Ofqual's advice currently is to continue to prepare for exams and other assessments as normal. Ofqual continues to work closely with exam boards, other regulators and the Department for Education to plan for a range of scenarios, as the public would expect. Our overriding priorities are fairness to students this summer and keeping disruption to a minimum. It is still many weeks until exams start and we will issue updated advice if necessary, giving schools and colleges as much notice as possible."

Please note that Trust and school leaders have been working on contingency plans in the event of any school closures.

I would like to thank all parents/carers for their continued support during this unprecedented time.

Yours faithfully,



Julian Appleyard OBE  
Chief Executive Officer