



6th March 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Coronavirus Update

Further to my previous correspondence on this matter, I would like to update you with all that we are doing at Halliford School to continue to carefully monitor this situation and to plan for any action that may be necessary. Below are various updates but please can I particularly draw your attention to the bullet points which list actions we would be most grateful for your support with.

You may well be aware that the UK Government have now published a Coronavirus Action Plan which you can read via the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-action-plan/coronavirus-action-plan-a-guide-to-what-you-can-expect-across-the-uk>

As you may also be aware, there are no immediate changes to current government guidelines despite an increase in the number of cases identified in the last few days. We are all encouraged to carry on as normal and do what we can to help minimise the spread of the virus, for example by regular hand washing.

As part of the Annual Heads' Conference this week, I attended a briefing on the current Coronavirus situation from the President of the Royal College of Physicians, Professor Andrew Goddard. This was incredibly helpful and explained the likely issues with the spread of this virus. His overwhelming advice though was that we must do all we can to follow the advice of the experts in their various fields and not allow ourselves to get overwhelmed with the many rumours that inevitably start to circulate at these times. He was also very clear that the single most effective action we can all take to stop the spread of the Coronavirus is to wash our hands thoroughly and regularly with hot water and soap or to use alcohol-based hand gels. We were also asked to remind students and those in our school communities not to touch your faces without clean hands. Professor Goddard was also very clear that the risk to young people is very low, however, there are more significant risks to those with underlying health conditions and the elderly.

While we need to remain calm, I believe that it is also important that we are prepared for any potential future developments and we have today been working on short, medium and long term contingency plans as a school. The plans, as I am sure you can imagine, cover many areas but I have highlighted a few things below to be aware of:

- We have installed additional alcohol based hand sanitisers around school for pupils, staff, parents and visitors to use.
- Matron keeps up to date lists of all students with underlying health conditions. If for any reason anything has changed in this regard, please could you keep matron up-to-date via email: matron@hallifordschool.co.uk
- I will be reminding the school of the importance of good hand hygiene and sensible precautions in our whole school assembly on Monday.
- Our advice at this stage is that we do not need to stop shaking hands but we will not be offended if visitors or those attending parents' evening do not wish to at this time. Please also respect the wishes

of some of my colleagues who for personal reasons may also wish not to extend this usual greeting to you as parents and visitors.

- We continue to keep all trips and visits under careful consideration and are in close consultation with the travel organisers and our insurers. At this stage we have not been advised that we need to cancel any planned trips or visits but please be assured we are monitoring this situation daily. This also includes our sports fixtures against other schools, where we are liaising closely with those schools we are due to play in the coming days and weeks.
- In the event that we are asked to close the school, either on the advice of Public Health England or as part of a larger Government led closure, please be assured that we are already making preparations to deliver lesson content and support to students via our on-line learning platform with Microsoft 365.

Once again, I would like to ask for your help in the following ways:

- Please remind your son/daughter of the importance of regular hand washing and making use of the hand sanitisers around school. If they have access to a personal hand sanitiser that is also incredibly helpful.
- Please remind your son/daughter to cover coughs or sneezes with a tissue and throw used tissues in a bin. Again, it is incredibly helpful if students have their own personal supply of tissues, but boxes of tissues are also available around the school for this purpose.
- Please contact the school to let us know if you or anyone you have been in close contact with has recently travelled to a Category 1 or Category 2 country.
(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-specified-countries-and-areas/covid-19-specified-countries-and-areas-with-implications-for-returning-travellers-or-visitors-arriving-in-the-uk>)
- Please seek individual medical advice from NHS111 if your child has existing health issues or weakened immunity.
- In the event that the school is asked to close, we would most likely receive very little notification. Please could you therefore ask your son/daughter to ensure that they do not keep books/files at school in lockers during this time but keep as many resources as possible at home.
- We provide all students with access to our on-line platform Microsoft Teams and Outlook Email. Please can you just double check that your son/daughter knows exactly how to do this in the event that we do have to consider sending work etc. via these means.

Our thoughts continue to be with all who have been affected by the Coronavirus across the world. I am extremely grateful for your help and support in helping your son/daughter to deal sensibly and proportionately with this matter. As a school where we believe strongly in the values of teamwork and resilience, I suspect we are all going to be learning many lessons to support these values over the coming weeks!

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JH', with a horizontal line underneath.