



12<sup>th</sup> February 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians,

### **Coronavirus**

I hope that this letter finds you all well and hopefully looking forward to half-term. I also sincerely hope that none of you or your families have been directly affected in any way by the current situation with the Coronavirus. Our thoughts and best wishes are with all of those who have been affected across the world.

As a school we have continued to monitor the advice being issued by the Department for Education and Public Health England. I felt it was important to write to ask for your support as we approach half-term to ensure that we do all we can as a school to protect our students and staff.

The following information and advice have been sent to schools from the Department for Education noting advice from Public Health England:

### **Practical advice for pupils and parents**

- You should not be unduly worried about the possibility of your children catching coronavirus.
- There is no reason why your children should not continue to attend their early years, school or, further education setting as normal.
- You should follow a common-sense, basic hygiene approach to reduce risks of the infections spreading, including:
  - Catch it - always carry tissues with you and use them to catch your cough or sneeze.
  - Bin it - used tissues should be placed in the bin as soon as possible.
  - Kill it - wash your hands often with warm water and soap.
- If your child is unwell e.g. fever, vomiting or diarrhoea, they should not be in school. Parents who are concerned about flu like symptoms should speak to their Health Centre or call NHS 111.

It would be incredibly helpful if you could ensure that your son / daughter has a pack of tissues and uses the toilets to wash their hands regularly or make use of a personal hand sanitiser.

### **Travel Advice**

The Health Secretary has now put powers into place which would allow for individuals to be kept in “supported isolation” if necessary, and has described the virus as a “serious and imminent threat” to the UK. However, the UK risk level remains moderate, and it has become clear that these powers are specifically designed to respond to a situation with those who have been repatriated. The powers will, however, also allow a speedy response should the virus spread more widely within the UK.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office continue to advise against all travel to Hubei Province and all but essential travel to mainland China. This advice does not yet extend to Hong Kong, Macao, and other countries in the region, but several countries have put additional screening measures and restrictions in place. The advice makes it clear that anyone travelling to certain countries in South-East Asia must be prepared for additional control measures and for the fact that travel is being curtailed or disrupted because of airline cancellations, particularly to and from Hong Kong. The picture is changing dynamically, so parents are advised to check FCO advice for any relevant information.

Those returning from the following countries and becoming symptomatic are asked to self-isolate and to contact 111:

- Thailand
- Japan
- Republic of Korea
- Hong Kong
- Taiwan
- Singapore
- Malaysia
- Macau

FCO travel advice for all countries can be found here. There is also an option to sign up to email alerts for any country that you may be due to visit in the near future so that you can see if there are any further travel restrictions due to take effect.

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>

Our priority must always be the safety and well-being of all our students, therefore we strongly advise against travelling to or from China or Hong Kong over half-term.

Public Health England and the Foreign Office have issued advice for anyone travelling to the area. This should be followed and can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/novel-coronavirus-and-avian-flu-advice-for-travel-to-china>

If you or family members have arrived back from China within 14 days, please follow the specific advice for returning travellers which includes information on quarantine arrangements.

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

As you will appreciate, the situation is fast-paced and ever-changing. Guidance may change over the coming weeks, and therefore we will continue to assess the situation and update our advice and communications to parents and students accordingly. Although some way off as yet, we are also in contact with the tour company providing the arrangements for our Rugby Tour to Japan this Summer and will continue to work with them to assess any potential risk as the situation regarding the virus continues to evolve.

We also want to make sure that we are doing everything we can to protect all of our students while they are here at school. Could I please remind you that any student who has either travelled to, or had close contact with anyone who has travelled to China, Thailand, Hong Kong and Macau that they will be required to remain away from school for 14 days after their return to the UK or after their contact with the person who has travelled to these countries recently.

In line with Foreign Office advice, we are also closely monitoring the situation in Japan, Korea, Singapore and Malaysia. It is highly likely that the same restrictions may soon apply to these countries also.

Unless the situation changes significantly over the next few weeks, it is likely that this will still be in place during the Easter holidays and thus any families planning to travel to these countries in the next few months should be mindful of the current and likely quarantine requirements.

I hope that you will understand the reasons for this and will help us to do what we can to protect all members of our Halliford community from the virus. Should you have any queries at all, please do not hesitate to be in touch.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'J' followed by a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke.