



Meole Brace School

6 March 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

I am writing to advise you of the steps we have put in place at Meole Brace School relating to the Coronavirus outbreak. I would like to reassure you that there have been no reported concerns in school and this message is only for information and reassurance of the steps we are taking.

The School is following guidance given by the Department for Education and Public Health England and we receive a daily update from them which we will share if there are any major developments. A helpline has also been put in place for Headteachers. DfE guidance is that all schools should remain open unless Public Health England request the school closes because of specific concerns. Children and staff are expected to be in school and attendance will be monitored in the usual way.

Earlier this week the Government launched their **Coronavirus Action Plan**, which sets out what the UK as a whole is doing to tackle the virus. The action plan can be found at www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-action-plan. In addition, our staff, parents/carers and young people have access to the **Academy Helpline** which has been launched to answer questions about Coronavirus related to education. This can be contacted by phoning 0800 046 8687 or email DfE.coronavirushelpline@education.gov.uk Opening hours are 8am to 6pm (Monday to Friday).

As a school our focus at the moment can be broadly broken down into three areas:

- General advice in school about preventing the spread of infection
- Looking at our planned visits, both overseas and in the UK
- Contingency planning in the unlikely event that the school is instructed to close

In terms of general advice about preventing the spread of infection, personal hygiene is the most important way we can tackle Coronavirus. There are general principles anyone can follow to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses, including:

- Wash your hands more often than usual, for 20 seconds each time with soap and water or hand sanitiser.
- Avoid putting your hands to your mouth, eyes or nose before washing them.
- Practice "cough etiquette", including keeping a distance if you feel unwell, covering coughs and sneezes with disposable tissues or the inside of an elbow, and regularly washing your hands. Covering your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throwing the tissue in a bin. ('Catch it, Bin it, Kill it')

Cont'd.....

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- Washing your hands often - with soap and water, or use alcohol sanitiser if handwashing facilities are not available. Students, staff and visitors should wash their hands:
 - before leaving home
 - on arrival at school
 - after using the toilet
 - after breaks and sporting activities
 - before food preparation
 - before eating any food, including snacks
 - before leaving school
- Avoid close contact with people who are unwell
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces

As a school we will be talking about these measures with students, and promoting good hygiene practice via reminders and posters around the school. All our toilets have hot water and soap, and this will be checked daily. We are ordering additional sanitiser/hand wipes, but supplies of these may become more limited. If you wish to send your young person into school with their own, that would be absolutely fine. We are advised that this should be an alcohol-based hand sanitiser that contains at least 60% alcohol. We will also be asking our cleaning team to pay particular attention to 'touch surfaces' in their daily clean.

All school visits that have been organised will continue to go ahead unless the Foreign Office or Public Health England advises us against travel to the specific destination. Over the next couple of months, we have five overseas residential visits planned (Sorento, Berlin, Tanga, Boulogne and Madrid). We will be conducting a full risk assessment on each, working with tour operators, our visit leaders and the Local Authority and we will be communicating separately and in full to all those involved. If any parent wishes to withdraw their child from a residential trip, they may of course do so, but are likely to forfeit monies paid unless travel is officially vetoed by the Foreign Office in which case the insurance company would be notified to effect refunds.

In addition, we are drawing up contingency plans in the unlikely event that the school is instructed to close. Given that any delivery system will likely be based around the use of Show My Homework (SMH) and the school email system, it would be sensible to make sure you and your young person have access to login details. If you need assistance in this, please contact school.

The next couple of weeks and months are uncertain, but throughout this period we will continue to be guided by government advice and will keep you informed of any significant changes either to the advice we are receiving or our response to it. We will communicate separately with those involved in forthcoming overseas visits.

Regards



Alan Doust
Headteacher