



Northumberland Church of England Academy Trust

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Coronavirus (Covid-19) Update 4 17/3/20

Dear Parents and Carers

Yesterday, the Prime Minister announced significant changes to the approach the Government is taking to limit the impact of Coronavirus (Covid-19). The new advice is aimed at reducing social contact, particularly for those in high risk groups.

What has not changed is that schools are instructed to remain open. Unless pupils are unwell (or a member of their family has symptoms) then they should continue to attend school as normal for the time being.

The updated advice has a number of significant changes:

1. If you or a member of your family has coronavirus symptoms (the most common symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are a new, continuous cough or a high temperature). The advice is now:

*“If you live with others and you or one of them have symptoms of coronavirus, then all household members must stay at home and not leave the house for **14 days**. The 14-day period starts from the day when the first person in the house became ill”.* Further details can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance>

If you and your child have to self-isolate, it is vital that you make this clear when you report the absence to your child’s school.

2. Anyone who develops symptoms while at school. The instruction to schools is now *“if staff, young people or children become unwell on site with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature they should be sent home”*. Schools have been given new procedures to follow which involves age appropriate isolation and requires parents and carers to collect their child immediately.

3. Vulnerable individuals with serious underlying health conditions. Further guidance will be issued by the Government later this week.

The key to reducing the spread of coronavirus continues to be good hygiene and we are continually reminding our pupils of this in an age appropriate way.

The BBC web site has a very clear summary and some useful pictures to explain the best hygiene measures and the main symptoms: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-51711227>



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Changes to school events

In light of the new guidance and focus on reducing social contact we are **cancelling all parents' evenings, trips and events until further notice**. Due to possible staff absence, it is likely that we may need to make temporary changes to some teaching groups. We are reviewing catering arrangements to ensure that we can still provide meals for everyone. This may result in some reduced choices at times.

Public exams are still planned to go ahead as normal at this stage. Until we are told otherwise, we will continue to prepare our pupils for these exams as normal.

Given what has happened in other countries, we have prepared contingency plans to support pupils to learn at home in case the Government tells schools to close. We will issue further details in a separate letter if and when this happens. In the meantime, it would be very helpful if parents and carers can check that their child can log in from home to each school's on line learning systems e.g. Purple Mash, Doodle, My Maths, etc. Any issues with this should be referred to your child's class or form teacher as soon as possible.

You may have noticed that the coronavirus updates are now numbered to help you keep track. As the situation may change rapidly, it is likely that we may have to issue more frequent updates. For speed, these will be online and we will not be routinely issuing paper copies.

It is a very worrying time for all of us and we understand that you will be very concerned about your families. Please be assured that, as always, our first concern is keeping our children safe and we follow all of the guidelines given to schools by Department for Education and Public Health England.

Yours faithfully



Alan Hardie
Chief Executive
Northumberland Church of England Academy Trust