



16<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

I am writing to update you on the current school situation in regards to Covid-19 (Coronavirus). First and foremost, I want you to know that the safety and welfare of all students, staff and families remains our number one priority.

As I am sure you are aware the national picture regarding advice about Covid-19 is changing all the time. We receive daily updates from Public Health England, DfE and West Sussex County Council, and I wish to summarise what is already in place and how, as a school, we are planning for the likely spread of this virus in the coming weeks and months.

### **Existing Precautions**

Further to our previous guidance, we continue to operate the following precautions available to us including:

- Monitoring the situation on a daily basis and acting on all medical advice and guidance.
- Repeated reminders about the importance of basic hygiene and in particular effective handwashing using soap. Signs are up throughout the school including the toilets. **Please can all parents/carers insist that all students wash their hands before they leave home in the morning.**
- Requesting that all staff and students that show symptoms of coronavirus (new persistent cough and/or high temperature) self-isolate for 7 days and seek medical advice before returning to school.
- All students that visit the medical room feeling generally unwell will have their temperatures taken and, if necessary, parents will be asked to collect.
- Increasing the frequency of cleaning and disinfecting high usage areas within the school.
- Hand sanitisers have been installed in reception and other areas within the school, this will be increased further.
- Opening as many doors as possible to reduce hand usage.
- PE are issuing reminders about post-match hand washing.
- Asking all visitors to reception to use the hand sanitiser.
- Refraining from shaking hands at the start of meetings with parents/carers and with visitors to the school when they arrive. This includes Year 11 Parents' Evening on Thursday, 26<sup>th</sup> March 2020.
- Working with our catering company to ensure practices within the school kitchens are checked and are of the highest vigilance.

### **School Trips and Gatherings in School**

The updated guidance for schools and colleges is that we are being advised against all overseas trips for children under 18 until further notice. At this point in time, trips to locations within the UK would mostly be categorised under the medium or large gatherings and, currently, cancellation has not been advised. If this guidance changes then clearly, some events may be cancelled.

Therefore, for the remaining weeks up to and including the Easter holidays the following represents our adjusted position:

- Ski Trip to Italy (Saturday 4th April to Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> April) has been cancelled. We are currently awaiting guidance from the travel provider with regards to our insurance claim and will update parents/ carers as soon as we know more.
- Visits to small/medium sized gatherings within the UK, including sporting fixtures, will continue unless we are advised otherwise.
- Year 11 Parents' Evening on Thursday, 26<sup>th</sup> March will go ahead with all internal precautions already explained.
- Easter Revision Classes for Year 11 students will go ahead as planned, unless we are advised otherwise.

Further visits after the Easter holidays will be assessed in the light of updated guidance, particularly if there are changes to advice about the size of gatherings. We will again be following the guidance issued by Public Health England and West Sussex County Council. However, we do have some trips abroad already booked to Spain and France towards the end of June 2020. It is not currently known whether the existing guidance from government will still apply at that stage and so we will update you as soon as we have further information. If we choose to cancel at this stage we would not be covered by insurance, as it would be deemed 'disinclined to travel', therefore, we shall continue as normal and see how the situation unfolds.

### **Staff absence, School Closure and Exams**

As you will be aware, the government have not taken the decision to close schools at this stage. If this were to be decided there is much more information that we need to have, not least the implications for this summer's exam season. To date, Ofqual (Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulations) have not confirmed alternative arrangements if scheduled GCSEs are postponed or cancelled.

We will notify relevant parents, carers and students as and when Ofqual informs schools of any changes to the published summer exam arrangements. Therefore, the only circumstances under which we would currently close would be either under the direction of Public Health England or related to levels of staff absence that would compromise the safe running of the school. In those circumstances we would notify parents/carers under the normal emergency closure procedures which are available on our website [www.chathigh.co.uk](http://www.chathigh.co.uk) (under the parents tab). In these circumstances, closure is likely to be at short notice, so parents/carers are asked to plan flexibly for this eventuality.

We will be holding further staff training after school today (Monday, 16th March) to set the expectations for working practice and provision for remote learning in the event of extended school closure. We will update you on what you can expect to support your son/daughter in due course. In the meantime, please can I ask that you check that you are able to access Edulink and that your son/daughter has access to all the online learning platforms we use including:

- School Email
- Google Classroom
- Edulink
- Hegarty Maths and [www.cgpbooks.co.uk](http://www.cgpbooks.co.uk) (Maths)
- EzyScience and Educake (Science)
- Duolingo (MFL)
- Seneca (English)
- The Everlearner (GCSE PE / OCR Sport Studies)
- [www.digitaltheatre.com](http://www.digitaltheatre.com) (Drama)

## **General Guidance**

Below are two useful links that describe the Government's guidance for schools

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19>

<https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/resources/campaigns/101/resources/5016>

Please be aware that there is a Department for Education coronavirus helpline available to answer questions about Covid-19 relating to education and children's social care; please see details below:

Phone: 0800 046 8687

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

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

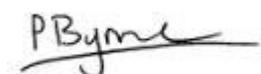
Like you, we are following the government guidance relating to symptoms and advised responses carefully. We understand that individuals will be affected by this situation differently. However, providing your child is symptom free, we would ask you to ensure they attend school each day.

Please understand that we are only able to respond to the official guidance we receive and will always try to act as calmly as possible in the best interest of the students. I understand that in these circumstances you may not always agree with those decisions, much as you may or may not agree with the official government response, but ask you to be patient with us and await further updates which we will ensure we give as clearly and as soon as we are able.

Finally, please can I ask for your prayers for everyone who has and will be affected by the coronavirus, as well as for our incredible NHS staff, many of whom are parents/carers of students at our school, as they work to bring this virus under control.

Thank you as always for your continued support in the face of these difficult and ever changing circumstances.

Yours sincerely



Mr Byrne  
Headteacher