



13 March 2020

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Dear Parents/Carers

With lots of media coverage of the impact of the continuing spread of Coronavirus we thought we should send this letter to clarify the school's position as some of the information e.g. on Cornwall Live has been misleading. The Department for Education has also launched a new helpline for schools and parents, to help answer questions about COVID-19 related to education. The helpline is for school staff, parents and young people: 0800 046 8687 or email dfe.coronavirushelpline@education.gov.uk. Telephone support is available from 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday (however be warned that there can be lengthy queues and we had to wait for 40 minutes to have a query of own clarified).

Further to updates from Public Health England, children who have either a fever or a new cough are required to self-isolate for 7 days. Please email secretary@gwinear.cornwall.sch.uk or call in the usual way, to let us know if your child has these symptoms and is self-isolating so we can monitor the situation closely. Obviously, children who need to self-isolate should not meet up with other children during the evening or at the weekend in order to protect other members of the school community from potential infection. Parents with concerns about their child's health should contact NHS online for advice

The school is following guidance from Public Health England and the Department for Education. These organisations are providing daily updates for schools and parents will understand that this advice is continuing to change in response to local and national cases.

The Government has a 4 staged approach:

1. Contain: detect early cases and prevent the disease from spreading for as long as reasonably possible.
2. Delay: slow the spread, lowering the impact and pushing it away from the winter
3. Research: to better understand the virus and the actions needed, including research into drug treatment and vaccination
4. Mitigate: provide the best care possible for people who become ill, support hospitals, public services and the economy.

At the present time, the Contain phase is still active nationally, and we have been told by the DfE that no school should close in response to a suspected (or confirmed) case of COVID-19 unless advised to do so. Should closure become an option or an instruction, the Headteacher and Chair of Governors will hold an emergency meeting and school closure

procedures will be put into place. Parents will be informed by text, email and via our website. Please help us to maintain good communication by ensuring we have up to date email contact details for you and alternatives should you have work commitments etc mean that you are unavailable for parts of the day. This is very important at this time.

Public Health England advice about reducing the risk of infection focuses on hand hygiene. We will be sharing key information with children via their teachers which includes: washing hands with soap and water often and particularly before eating, (hand sanitiser may not be as effective as soap and hot water), avoiding touching eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands and covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue and then throwing this in a bin. Our school is well stocked with soap, and all visitors are currently being asked to follow correct hand washing procedures in the foyer washroom before entering classrooms.

The key symptoms of Coronavirus infection are a cough, difficulty in breathing and a temperature (above 38 degrees C). Obviously, these symptoms are common to many cold and flu infections and if unsure you should contact NHS 111 for advice. If the advice is to self-isolate children's absence will be authorised and the school can be contacted for details about curriculum coverage for the duration of isolation.

Children who are not required to self-isolate by Public Health England should continue to attend school and parents requiring further advice should contact Mr Gardiner or the school office in the first instance.

Should there be a confirmed case of Coronavirus, then the school will inform Public Health (who will provide further advice), Governors and the Local Authority. We will inform other local schools who we work closely with, and who may have families linked to the confirmed case and parents so that you are kept updated.

At this time, we are anticipating that there could be some disruption to education for children over the remainder of the school year. We are unable at this stage to predict the scale of this disruption. This is likely to arise at some point as a result of higher levels of staff absence, and because we may be required to close the school for a period of time.

Our plans to be able to continue to set work for children, during any period of disruption, are reliant on them having access to the internet. Parents without reliable online access for their children are asked to inform the school by emailing secretary@gwinear.cornwall.sch.uk. We will keep a list of children for whom we need to provide alternative resources. Parents are advised that it will be more difficult for us to provide work without online access and that we may have to provide different activities and resources if children cannot get online at home. Teachers will communicate lessons to children using the Seesaw app (all children will soon have their passwords to access this) and may signpost activities on other websites such as Mathletics. Lessons will not be in real time so that families can work best around their individual schedules. However, we will ensure that there is sufficient content to provide appropriate coverage so that children's progress is not compromised.

We are continuing to closely monitor the national and local developments and to make any required adjustments to our planned trips and visits. Parents will be kept fully informed if their child is due to participate in a trip and trip leaders will be in regular contact with

families about our plans. At the moment camps, including London, are still scheduled to go ahead but this may change.

We hope this information is helpful to our parents and families. We are aware that we have children in our school, and family members who have serious underlying health conditions: parents with individual concerns should contact NHS 111 for advice and keep the school informed about any specific concerns affecting our children. Essential to our school is that parents and students follow Public Health England advice with regards to self-isolation and, in the interest of the health of our school community, parents should know that we will not admit a student, visitor or member of staff to our school site where this would contravene Public Health England advice. With this in mind could we ask you to please inform us if you are planning on travelling abroad in the Easter holidays or the weeks leading up to it so that we can signpost you to the appropriate advice.

We will keep parents fully updated about our management plans and would like to thank parents, in advance, for their ongoing support. Our priorities remain, as always, the safety of our students and the highest quality of education provision.

Yours sincerely

Mr L Gardiner
Headteacher

Useful contact details for parents:

NHS 111: for advice about health and suspected cases of Coronavirus.
Department for Education Helpline 0800 046 8687 or email
DfE.coronavirushelpline@educaiton.gov.uk (8am-6pm Monday to Friday)