



13 March 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

Re: COVID-19

I am writing, considering recent developments, to give you further information about the Coronavirus and the possible effects on school.

Self-isolation advice and absence

The situation is escalating somewhat. I must urge parents to ensure that self-isolation is implemented for you or your children if you have a fever **or** you have a new persistent cough. The advice from the NHS and Public Health England can be found on the links sent out yesterday and will explain the exact measures to take. The self-isolation period is a minimum of 7 days. Students will not be penalised for absence for self-isolating but please only keep children off school if they have the specific symptoms. We have a special registration code to use so please do follow our guidance sent yesterday and email absence@testbourne.school with the reason "self-isolation" and your child's name and tutor group. To keep phone lines clear, **please do not phone in for absence unless you have no access to email.**

We continue to monitor and follow advice from Public Health England and the NHS.

Contact details

Please ensure that we have the latest email addresses and mobile phone numbers for you. There are likely to be several communications over the next few days so please frequently check your devices for updates. Please note that children will need to frequently check their school email for invitations to virtual sessions and/or instructions for work if these are possible (see below).

Toilets

We continue to monitor and follow advice from the government, Public Health England and the NHS. Current door control on toilets has been suspended to allow for hand washing between lessons. Please encourage your children to look after this important facility for everyone's benefit at this critical time and to ensure that they get to lessons on time.

Canteen

In order to further prevent spread of infection, we are suspending the use of the fingerprint readers in the canteen. This may slow the queue down a little as students' details have to be

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manually searched. I think you will agree that this is a sensible precaution and would appreciate you talking to your children about this. We would recommend that you use the online systems to top up catering accounts, rather than using the money loaders. There are hand gels available for those who do need to use the machines. We recommend hand washing before and after use.

Partial or full school closure mechanism

Although the school currently remains open, we will need to continually monitor the situation. If we are given the instruction to close, we will communicate this as swiftly as possible. We also need to prepare for the eventuality that several staff need to self-isolate. Certain levels of absence mean that it is not safe or even possible to open the school to all students. Unlike closures we have had in the past, this situation is completely dynamic and unpredictable. In a situation such as snow, for example, we make the decision the night before so that children do not become stranded in school (or at bus stops along the way). This is not possible at this time and we may need to decide to close or partially close depending on an assessment of staff absence on the morning of a school day. If this is the case, we would ask parents for their support, patience and sense of urgency if asked to pick children up from school. We will, of course, let parents know as early as possible and hope to avoid children making the journey unnecessarily wherever possible.

Provision in the case of full or partial closure

Students can download all Microsoft software, free of charge (this is part of the school's license fee). Staff will be considering work for students to take home. Students can login to the Student Portal (<https://testbourne.sharepoint.com/sites/students>). Students can also take advantage of our software licenses for Educake, GCSE Pod, Kerboodle and My Maths for example. Additionally, there are free online resources such as YouTube, Seneca Learning and BBC Bitesize that can be helpful. We are investigating provision of limited virtual teaching using Microsoft Teams and will be training staff how to use the technology on Monday evening. Please note that we will do our best to provide resources and teaching but appreciate your support and understanding of the fact that not all subjects lend themselves to this, teaching staff may be ill or teaching staff may have to look after dependents themselves. Priority will be given to Year 11 at this critical time.

Exams and NEA assignments

Year 11 students should use revision guides and online resources to prepare for their exams. The exam boards also have good resources on their websites in terms of past papers, mark schemes and examiner's reports. At this time, students should assume that NEA deadlines and exam timetables will remain unchanged until otherwise advised. Students should not be worried about NEA deadlines and work that still needs completing. Unless we are told otherwise, students must not complete NEA work at home (as this is a breach of exam regulations). We will act upon information as soon as we are made aware of it and will put in

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place as much contingency as possible. In other words, please encourage your children to not worry about things out of their control.

School visits

As you are aware, school visits abroad have been banned from today until otherwise notified. We have one trip abroad in the summer term which will remain under review. It may be that things have calmed by that point. You will be notified on a case by case basis regarding other trips and visits. These are being determined through modified risk assessment of the trip itself and the effect on staffing at school. In general, we cannot allow trips that will put a significant strain on staffing or put children at risk. We ask for your patience and understanding with this matter too.

We have been overwhelmed by the support of families and the attitude of students at this difficult time. I hope that we can continue to count on your support as we all come to terms with an unprecedented situation.

Yours faithfully,

Mr J Beck
Headteacher

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