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Medical Update on Cold and Flu Virus and Coronavirus

Dear Parents and Carers,

Following on from the letter sent out earlier this month, we have continued to work with our children to remind them of the basic things they can do to keep themselves healthy and well during the winter period.

We have talked about the importance of handwashing, catching our sneezes in tissues and even the best way to cough to avoid any winter germs spreading unnecessarily. We have also put additional signs up around school reminding children how to wash their hands properly.

The following advice has been sent to us from the Director of Public Health for West Sussex County Council.

If you have returned from any high risk Coronavirus outbreak areas since 19th February, call NHS111 to inform them of your recent travel, stay indoors and avoid contact with other people even if you do not have symptoms. Please refer to the link below for an updated list of outbreak areas and advice for the public.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-specified-countries-and-areas>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-information-for-the-public>

We would also like to remind you of the following:

What is self-isolation?

Self-isolating is a precaution to provide people with health advice about any symptoms in case they become unwell. These people are being advised to “self-isolate” which means they should stay at home and avoid contact with other people as a precaution. It does not mean they are ill and people who have had contact with these individuals do not need to take action.

Those who have been told to ‘self-isolate’ are being asked to avoid other people and stay at home and not go to work or school. During this time, they will be supported by Public Health England, who are monitoring them and will undertake further testing if they show any symptoms of the virus, and provide any further care needed.

Should I send my child to school?

Yes. The safety, welfare and wellbeing of all in our school community is our primary concern and a constant dialogue has, and will continue, to take place with the relevant authorities to ensure that the school acts in accordance with guidance. We are working in collaboration with, and being guided by, the Local Authority and Public Health England to ensure that we are acting consistently with the right medical advice.

The Local Authority has confirmed to us that Public Health England and the office of the Chief Medical Officer are clear in their advice that schools do not need to close. Our school management team and Governing Body have decided to keep our school open. I will continue to keep you updated with any advice that is passed to us.



At this present time, there is low risk for anyone attending our school. On advice from the Chief Medical Officer, the risk has been declared as "moderate" - a level which allows government to plan for all eventualities but that ultimately, that the risk to individuals remains "low".

Please contact the school if you are thinking about keeping your child at home.

Where do I get accurate information from?

Please also be aware that media speculation is rife about Coronavirus and not everything you read in the newspapers and online is accurate.

The release of trusted and accurate information will always be released initially by the Chief Medical Officer. Further guidance will then be issued by Public Health England, the Department for Health and Social Care or the NHS. The Local Authority will also support those messages.

You can find the latest information and advice from Public Health England at www.gov.uk/coronavirus

Everyone is being reminded to follow Public Health England advice:

Like with other illnesses, coronavirus infection usually occurs through close contact with a person with novel coronavirus via cough and sneezes or hand contact.

- Always carry tissues with you and use them to catch your cough or sneeze. Then bin the tissue, and wash your hands with soap and water
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after using public transport.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are unwell. The timing of our advice coincides with Public Health England advising schools of their response to the Novel Coronavirus which has featured heavily in the news recently. Their current message to schools is that we should carry on as normal and that there is no need to take any measures that we wouldn't do as with any other seasonal flu period.

If you have any concerns or questions, please do not hesitate to contact either myself or a member of the schools leadership team – I would remind you though that we are not medical professionals and our response would normally be the same: Parents and Carers are best placed to know when or if their child is well enough to attend school.

We will of course continue to keep parents informed with any updates as and when we receive them.

Yours sincerely,

Mr King