

Tuesday 17th March 2020

Dear Parent and Guardians,

Covid19 Contingency Plan Update

This letter is to provide an update regarding Coronavirus Covid 19. As stated in previous communications, it is difficult to predict what might happen next, but we will continue to take steps to plan as best we can and appreciate your support and understanding.

Current Actions:

Raising awareness

We have continued with staff giving specific hygiene advice – the ‘flu season’, how germs are spread, how to washing hands, “catch it, bin it, kill it” and how we can help to delay the spreading of germs/flu. This primarily follows NHS 111 and Government advice and focuses in particular on washing hands regularly.

We have held a whole class assembly highlighting the importance of hygiene, showing videos through the NHS on hand washing and “catch it, bin it, kill it” and child friendly discussion on Coronavirus.

Hand sanitisers

As you will be aware, there is a global shortage of hand sanitisers, however we do still have a sufficient amount to ensure the school is able to provide hand wash which we are asking the children to use regularly but sensibly. We will continue to encourage all children to wash their hands thoroughly at the beginning of the school day, before and after lunchtime and during the afternoon as a minimum.

General cleaning

We have continued to work closely with our site controller and cleaning team, to ensure that additional attention is paid to high-risk areas daily. Our cleaning team will be conducting a deep clean of the school over the Easter Holidays. Our site controller is also on hand throughout the day to respond to requests, e.g. where soap dispensers require additional filling due to increased usage during this period. Also he is disinfecting all door handles and toilet systems every morning before the school day begins, as well as using Dettol spray on chairs.

Future Actions:

As a school, we are looking to reduce risks and contact further.

We have cancelled a number of events:

- Whole school assemblies - class/year group assemblies will run instead
- Friday celebration and Falcons class assemblies. This will be reviewed when we return after the Easter holidays
- All external training events involving members of our staff
- Sporting events which involves our children participating with other schools
- Parent/teacher consultations– we will send out the report used by the teachers for the meetings to parents with an additional teacher comment by the end of the week
- PTA school disco for this term
- Year 3 trip to The Living Rainforest
- Any remaining trips to Woodley Library
- Drama performance
- Whole School Easter Service at the church
- External evening lettings – this is to reduce the risk of people from outside our school community bringing anything into the school building
- Some external afterschool clubs have stopped through their own company guidance/decision. Where possible, at this time, we will continue with extra-curricular afterschool clubs.

Contingency planning

The government is planning for a range of future scenarios, one of which includes the possibility of a temporary school closure but to date the government's preference is to keep schools open. We are predicting that school closures will happen at some point.

Partial closure:

With new guidance coming from the government relating to people self-isolating for 14 days if they are living with someone who has a cough or a high temperature, then we are going to be facing a situation where more staff and children will be required to stay home, even if they do not have symptoms themselves. It is likely in time that staff absence does occur, and we may be forced to partially close the school to specific classes, year groups or Key Stages. When we have teachers that are required to self-isolate, we will attempt to cover classes internally, but this will not always be possible. If we are unable to cover a class or classes, then parents affected will be emailed and texted by 7.30am to inform them of class closures. We appreciate that this will create disruption to parents and families, however we only have a certain amount of internal teaching cover and our regular external agencies are informing us they are already finding it hard to find staff to provide cover.

Health & Safety guidance will always be a factor in decision making regarding class sizes. Combining classes may not be a viable option due to the H & S guidance on room sizes throughout the school and the capacity these rooms can hold. We will be attempting to keep the whole school open as best we can, with Breakfast Club and Afterschool club provision continuing.

School closure

As you will be aware, schools in various countries have closed their schools for various time lengths. We have not been given any information or guidance if or when this might happen in England.

However, if this is to happen, please note the following:

Day to day communication

- We have remote access to the parent and student database SIMS, and can email and text parents to keep them updated. This, and our website where possible, will provide up to date information. Please ensure that you check these regularly.
- Our admin and finance teams all have laptops which will allow this part of the school to run as normal. This means we can respond to emails, process invoices, and manage banking functions.
- Caterlink are hoping to be able to continue to provide a school lunch for all children who are entitled to Free School Meals, which parents would be able to collect from a central location. This however, is still to be finalised and will of course remain dependent on food supplies, availability of Caterlink staff and the staff having a school kitchen to work from.

Children's learning

- It is vital that if the school closes, children should continue to learn at home. As stated previously, we will set work daily which will be emailed. Class teachers have been busy preparing learning that can be completed at home. The focus each day will be learning in Maths, Reading and Writing. In addition, we will also provide links to Mathletics and Purple Mash, times tables, reading and phonics as well as topic activities. We will also aim to provide other websites which children can access which will support any additional learning that parents may wish for their child to complete. Obviously, we would be very happy if you wish to support your child with their learning. We do appreciate that at this time, there could be stresses/issues that may create challenges for families to support children to complete home learning and understand that learning may not be completed.
- Over the coming week will be sending some resources home with the children that will help support their learning, which we would ask you to keep safe at home, until such time they are needed.

Parents can help during this time by:

- Checking for school emails daily so information is made available to the child/children enabling them to access their learning. Ideally this would be using a lap top or PC, but we have recognised that for many, access will be through their mobile phone or tablet.
- Making sure your child/children have somewhere quiet to work. In the event of an extended school closure, we would ask parents/guardians to try and ensure conditions at home are conducive to allow up to three hours of quality work/learning over each day. Teachers will be able to answer most queries via emails, although it will not be an immediate response.

Mental Health and Well being

Children may well become more concerned about Coronavirus as the government continues to give updates and various restrictions being implemented. We should all be supporting the children in managing this time appropriately. We appreciate that you know your child/children best but together we should:

- Do our best not to sensationalise or over-dramatise this issue.
- Steer children away from some social media coverage
- Not hide information from the children and answer questions with known facts
- Not pass our own concerns or stresses to our children.

Finally, this is clearly a difficult and unprecedented situation for us all and we are doing our very best to react to and plan for situations as they arise the best we can. We are asking for your continued support as we take those decisions in order to protect the health and welfare of Beechwood Primary School's community.

Kind regards,

Miss S E Hunter
Headteacher
Beechwood Primary School