



# Head's

## Update

16.3.2020

KEEPING YOU INFORMED ABOUT OUR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENTS

Dear Parents and Carers,

With so much in the press currently around Covid-19 (Coronavirus), I thought it best to give you an update from school and to assure you that we are doing everything we can to keep up to speed with the latest Government (Public Health England) advice and will share any new precautionary measures the school takes as, and when, necessary.

Last week, there were strong indications from Government that further actions will be taken within the next days or weeks to reduce the risk of this particular coronavirus virus spreading. You may have seen that the Irish Government have made the decision to close schools and colleges. At this stage, the English Government have **not** informed us that they are intending to close schools, however, this is an ever-changing situation which is very new to everybody and as a result, we are putting plans into place to respond to a variety of scenarios.

### ***What is the current situation?***

The **school remains open** – this is the current official guidance we've been given:

- Most school functions continue to run as normal e.g. Breakfast and After School clubs
- Pupils should attend unless they feel unwell – if your child has any of the following symptoms they **should remain at home for 7 days and self isolate**:
  - a new, continuous cough and/or
  - a temperature
- If your child is unwell, report this as you would normally, via the App or ring in to school between 8.30 and 9.00am
- We'll keep you up to date with any changes to the current situation.

We are currently in "Stage 2 – Prevention" (as of 16.3.2020) on our risk assessment but we are very close to moving into "Stage 3 – Mitigate/ Delay". Within Stage 2, we have raised awareness through lessons and assemblies, increased our cleaning regime and also our handwashing protocol. We are increasing the amount of times that the children are required to wash their hands (please see the appendix at the end of this letter).

Within Stage 3, we will have to make some difficult decisions. In preparation of this stage, some of the decisions we have already made are:

- ⇒ Postponing Assemblies
- ⇒ Removing carpet time
- ⇒ Staggering lunches
- ⇒ Cancelling all training events for staff where staff will be exposed to high volumes of people
- ⇒ Limiting the number of parents and external visitors coming into school. Any visitors that do come into school need to follow our hand washing routines before entering the building.
- ⇒ Cancelling pupil events where there will be mass gathering or high volumes of members of the public

- ⇒ Cancelling our Easter events (FOASS Make and Take booked 31<sup>st</sup> March and our Easter Church Service booked for Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> April)
- ⇒ Parents/Carers to only come into speak to the office in person unless you absolutely need to. Remember you can drop money and letters into the red post box in Reception.

Decisions will also be made shortly about whether our Y3/4 trip to St. Albans will go ahead and our Parent Consultation Evenings.

For the moment, we are allowing music teachers and sports coaches to continue to come into school, having received a clear understanding of the action they are taking but we will continue to review the situation daily, and as we know more. We are also continuing with swimming lessons, unless we receive any information from Sports England advising against this.

As the Government advice currently is that anyone with a new persistent cough or fever is to self isolate, this could affect our staffing and could impact upon the day-to-day running of the school. If we find ourselves in that situation, the following actions could be taken:

- Putting classes together with shared staff
- Dividing classes between teaching staff

Here are some common FAQs with regards to Covid-19 which you may find useful, however please be mindful that the guidance is changing on a daily basis:

### ***What do I do if my child become unwell?***

If you think you or your child may have the symptoms, use [NHS 111 online](#) if at all possible before calling 111. If staff or pupils have the symptoms of a new cough or fever, then they should now take steps to stay at home and not leave their house for seven days from when their symptoms started. This will help to protect others in the community while they are infectious. Anyone displaying symptoms should not go to a GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital. Please report absence in the normal way by calling the school office.

If you keep your child at home, you do not need to contact NHS 111 to tell them they are staying at home and Public Health England will not be testing people who are self-isolating with mild symptoms. If your child's symptoms worsen during home isolation, or are no better after 7 days, please contact NHS 111 Online at [111.nhs.uk](https://111.nhs.uk).

You can view the guidance around self-isolation online: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-people-with-confirmed-or-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

If your child is in school and it becomes evident that they have a continuous cough and/or a high temperature, we will contact you immediately and ask for your child to be collected. We will do this not only for the health and wellbeing of your child, but also for the health and wellbeing of the school community.

### ***What do I do if someone in my close family, or someone my children have had close contact with is diagnosed with Covid-19 or has travelled from a country listed as a heightened risk?***

Please follow the latest government advice. Please inform the school as soon as you can.

### ***What do I do if the school tells me there is a proven case of Covid-19?***

If there are any proven cases of Covid-19 affecting the school community (child, parent, carer, or staff member), you will be informed as soon as possible. As the current advice stands, schools are being told not to close without direct advice to do so from Public Health England. If there is a confirmed case, and the advice received by the school is to remain open, parents worried about any underlying medical issues that already affect their family should speak to the school.

We would ask parents in these circumstances to contact the school having contacted medical professionals and received further advice relating to their specific circumstances. We would also ask that you keep the school informed of the advice you have been given by medical professionals in assessing any risk to vulnerable people in your families.

***How do I Keep up to speed with the latest advice?***

You will probably be aware that the advice concerning returners from many countries has changed. Please keep yourselves informed of the latest travel advice here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public>

Advice to schools is publicly available and can be found here:

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

Further advice for other sectors can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/covid-19-guidance-for-non-clinical-settings-and-the-public>

The Department for Education Coronavirus helpline is also experiencing a high volume of calls. Staff, parents and young people can contact this helpline but please be patient, you may be placed in a queue. Telephone: 0800 046 8687 (Monday – Friday 08:00 – 18:00)

***What useful resources are there to use with my child?***

Talk to your children about the coronavirus. It's a scary time and we should make sure children feel supported. [BBC Newsround](#) has regular updates for younger children and [YoungMinds](#) has practical steps older children can take to help with anxiety.

***What will happen if the school closes?***

Despite the Education Minister's announcement that schools will remain open for the time being, there is the possibility that the advice will change or that we may find ourselves in a situation we have no option but to close due and our planning includes preparing for a National closure. **We will only close the school if advised by Public Health England that we should do so or if the government announces blanket closures. However insufficient staffing levels due to illness may also necessitate closure. This may happen at short notice but we will endeavour to contact you as quickly as possible.** I have shared our current and action plan with the staff team. This includes planning for how and when we will communicate with parents and vice versa, Health and Safety elements and what action would be taken should staff fall ill. We are currently compiling work that could be shared with all children via our school website or on App. This will be a mix of Power-points, website links, spellings, times tables and some suggested non screen activities that the children can try. If we come to the point of closure, we will send the children home with any resources that may be relevant to their age or stage. As some of our teachers have young families or dependents, we will do our very best to balance supporting our school community as well as our own families.

With this in mind, **it is important that you make us aware if your child will not have access to a computer to view this work and please make sure we have your correct email address and ensure you are checking your App notifications regularly.** During this period we will endeavour to use the App for only essential communication, so when you get an alert, please read the messages carefully.

Please send any amendments to your contact details to;

[SchoolOffice@alfredstreet.northants.sch.uk](mailto:SchoolOffice@alfredstreet.northants.sch.uk)

Thank you to everyone for your continued support of the staff team during this time, it is hugely appreciated. Whatever challenges we may face in the next week or so, I feel confident that we will meet these together.

Kind regards

Mrs K O'Connor  
Head Teacher