

Waterside Primary Academy

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Headteacher: Daniel Atherton



Friday 13th March 2020

Re: Coronavirus (Covid-19) – The School Response

I want to inform you how we, as a school, are responding to the latest situation with regard to Coronavirus. Like all schools we are maintaining a careful watch on the matter, to make sure that our response is proportionate and calm. We all – staff, pupils and parents – have a part to play in maintaining that position.

What we have done:

We have re-iterated messages about personal hygiene to all pupils, and made sure that the school has adequate soap for everyone to use. We have ensured that ALL pupils wash their hands before they eat their lunch and at other times during the school day – this is good hygiene and something that our children do (and have done) as part of the school day. Our cleaning team come on a daily basis and are making sure that the school is as hygienic as possible. We have not specifically mentioned the coronavirus to any children at Waterside as I do not believe that there is any reason to at this stage. This viewpoint is based on advice from the Department for Education and Public Health England which only reinforces good basic hygiene and extended hand washing. However, should we feel it necessary, all classes will discuss the virus and what the responsibility of everyone is, to help keep this at bay. We will notify you in advance if we deem this to be required.

I receive daily updates from various government and local authority and health sources. The most recent such communication stated that no school should close in response to a suspected or confirmed case unless directed to do so by Public Health England. We will continue to monitor the advice from the relevant authorities carefully and act on it prudently if required.

What parents need to do:

I ask that parents follow the advice that has been issued to all citizens. This is readily available at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public#history>

At this time of year there are pupil absences due to seasonal colds, coughs and sneezes. If you do keep your child off school because of ill health, we would be grateful if you could communicate the specific reason to us when you advise us of the absence. This will help us monitor any patterns within the school community. In the unlikely event that you are asked to get your child tested for Covid-19 we would be grateful to know that as well as soon as possible.

In addition, please continue to inform us of any close family member who has returned from abroad in the last month. Also if any family member has been in contact with someone at work who has



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developed symptoms or been tested, please let us know. The more information we can gather, the easier and better for us to identify any child or member of our school community who could be at higher risk.

What might we do?

It is difficult to predict what might happen over the next few days/weeks. Should a member of our school community have a direct encounter with the virus, we will contact Public Health England who will instruct us on appropriate action. This action would be dependent on the specific details of each individual case, meaning that it is not possible to provide any information in advance.

I have included an attachment, which outlines for you our Progression of Restrictions/Staged Response for dealing with the situation. When you look at this document you will see 4 response stages. We are currently at Stage 2 – Prevention. Again, as this stage just reinforces good basic personal hygiene, we have not specifically mentioned the virus to the children. This will only happen at Stage 3. You will be notified by our usual communication lines should we progress to a different stage (email, Twitter and School Website).

There is currently no cause for concern at Waterside Primary Academy and we are operating as usual. I will keep you informed of any updated information and advice received.

Yours sincerely,

Daniel Atherton

Headteacher

