

# Waterside Primary Academy

Blackhorse Avenue, Chesham, Buckinghamshire HP5 1QU

Telephone: 01494 786608 Facsimile: 01494 773287

Email: [office@watersideprimaryacademy.org](mailto:office@watersideprimaryacademy.org)

Website: [www.watersideprimaryacademy.org](http://www.watersideprimaryacademy.org)

Headteacher: Daniel Atherton



**Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2020**

## **Re: Coronavirus (Covid-19) – New Update**

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Following my letter dated Friday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2020 and the updates from the Government yesterday, I would like to make sure that all members of the school community are aware of the following information and new procedures we are putting into place:

### **Self-Isolation (copied from Public Health England)**

- **staff, young people and children should stay at home if they are unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature to avoid spreading infection to others.** Otherwise they should attend education or work as normal.
- **if you live with others and you or one of them have symptoms of coronavirus, then all household members must stay at home and not leave the house for 14 days.** The 14-day period starts from the day when the first person in the house became ill.
- it is likely that people living within a household will infect each other or be infected already. Staying at home for 14 days will greatly reduce the overall amount of infection the household could pass on to others in the community.

As a school, we will have to follow this guidance. Therefore, if anyone in your household develops a **'new, continuous cough or has a high temperature'**, all of the family must self-isolate for 14 days. For further information about this and what you should and shouldn't do, please visit the Public Health England website.

**Non-Essential Contact** - For consistency for families with children at different schools, I have spoken to many of these schools to ensure that our responses are similar (or the same), where possible. Following these discussions and the clear advice from the government, we are putting the following in place with immediate effect to contain our school community and make reasonable adjustments where practical.

1. **Parent Consultations (Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> March 2020)** - These are postponed. As new information is received, I will inform you of how these will be rearranged. This could involve telephone consultations or, should the school close for a period, staff being asked to write full reports while working at home to be released as soon as possible. This will then lead to the consultations being swapped to the end of the school year if possible at that time.



# Waterside Primary Academy

Blackhorse Avenue, Chesham, Buckinghamshire HP5 1QU

Telephone: 01494 786608 Facsimile: 01494 773287

Email: [office@watersideprimaryacademy.org](mailto:office@watersideprimaryacademy.org)

Website: [www.watersideprimaryacademy.org](http://www.watersideprimaryacademy.org)



Headteacher: Daniel Atherton

2. **Staggered Drop-off and collection** – With immediate effect, we are taking the following response to minimise gatherings on the school site.

**Morning Drop-off** – Children may enter the school via the usual entrance or a new entrance which is located at the bottom of the year 3/4/5 staircase. Ideally, those entering through the Box Tree entrance will use this new entrance. Children in nursery, reception and year 6 should continue with their usual morning entrances. We will also be opening the gates/doors 5 minutes earlier and closing them 5 minutes later to allow a steady stream of people on and off the school site. Therefore, these entrances will be open between 8.40am and 9am. Please can everyone make the most of this extended drop off time and ensure that adults leave the school site straight away.

**Collection** – We are also extending the window for this. All classes will be asked to be on the playground to dismiss children at 3.20pm from today. Therefore, children can be collected from the playground between 3.20pm and 3.35pm. Again, please do not all arrive at 3.20pm to avoid gatherings on the playground and please leave as soon as possible.

**Assemblies** – These are all being cancelled within school. This is a precaution and all content we cover in assemblies will be delivered in classrooms.

**Playtimes/Lunchtimes** – These are currently staggered so no changes will be made here.

**Breakfast Bunch/After School Clubs** – As these are run by school staff, these will continue as usual. Again, this helps with staggering the start and end of the school day and provide valuable services to all of you.

3. **Absence & School Work** - We have a number of pupils who are not in school because they are self-isolating or have someone at home with an underlying health issue or, indeed, have one themselves. I expect that number of absentees will increase with the change in government guidance yesterday and I also expect that there will be staff absence for the same reasons. As the Headteacher, I have the ability to authorise absences in 'exceptional circumstance'. This situation clearly falls into this bracket and I will therefore mark all children who are absent due to having a cough or high temperature as a 'Y' (Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances). In order to continue our robust safeguarding procedures, all families in self-isolation must inform us immediately by email or phone that they are doing so. We will contact these families on a daily basis to check how they are and offer support where appropriate.

We have had a number of emails from parents asking teachers to send work home for absent pupils and, while I understand the parental concern, I do not believe that it is reasonable to expect teachers to do this on top of everything else they are already doing, which will undoubtedly extend to covering for absent colleagues in the days ahead.



# Waterside Primary Academy

Blackhorse Avenue, Chesham, Buckinghamshire HP5 1QU

Telephone: 01494 786608 Facsimile: 01494 773287

Email: [office@watersideprimaryacademy.org](mailto:office@watersideprimaryacademy.org)

Website: [www.watersideprimaryacademy.org](http://www.watersideprimaryacademy.org)



Headteacher: Daniel Atherton

4. **Year 6 Children** – Due to the statutory tests for these children, this year group are the priority. From today, Children in year 6 will be bringing work books home which are to be brought in to school every day. This will mean that these children can continue to work from home if they are self-isolating. Mr Waters will send a text message every morning (starting tomorrow) to state the pages that the children should complete while at home. Any year 6 child who is currently absent will have these delivered to them this evening.

All measures outlined above are to minimise the spread of the virus in the school so that we can stay open and stop any external persons coming into our school. I also have a responsibility to protect our staff and hopefully these measures will prevent them becoming ill, thus keeping the school open.

I request that everyone follows the guidance outlined above. I appreciate that many of you will have differing views about the content of this email but I have had to make decisions in the best interest of everyone in the school. We have had a lack of clarity in advice given to us which has been frustrating but we will all follow the plans above rigidly moving forwards.

Finally, I would like to stress that we have had no confirmed cases in our school community, despite much speculation. Should we have a confirmed case, I would inform you of this immediately and follow all relevant advice. We believe that all measures above are in the best interest of all involved and will continue to update you should the situations change. As you may be aware, the Government are sending out daily information which I will continue to act upon and I will update these procedures as necessary. As a community, I ask everyone to support each other through this time. If we can do anything as a school to support you, please do let us know as we will happily assist where we can.

Thank you again for your continued support with this ever-evolving situation.

Yours sincerely,

Daniel Atherton

**Headteacher**

