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Dear Parent/Carer,

11 March 2020

This letter aims to update you on our current planning as a school around the spread of Coronavirus. Since returning from the February break, we have studied updates from the DfE, spoken regularly with staff at the DfE Coronavirus helpline and with staff at Public Health England. I am also in regular communication with senior colleagues at Consilium Academies to not only check the interpretation of the guidance, but also to explore contingency plans for different situations.

Current context

Last week, we made the decision to cancel our planned Ski Trip 2020 to Italy. Pupils and Staff would have visited Bormio in the Lombardy region, which whilst being open to visitors at that time, was subject to extraordinary restrictions in identified areas. Subsequently the Lombardy region, and more recently Italy as a whole, has been subject to Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) advice against all but essential travel. The difficult decision to cancel the ski trip was taken to safeguard the health and safety of pupils and staff on the trip and our school community as a whole. We are currently checking the viability of each planned trip or activity on a case by case basis, but it is possible that we will have some further cancellations in the future. If we are in the position of making these difficult decisions, we will contact parent/carers explaining our decision and make every attempt to reschedule the visit or activity.

In school, we have instigated measures to support both pupils and staff to sanitise hands on arrival and have installed additional sanitisers in toilets. We are carrying out regular checks throughout the day to ensure that soap is replenished and our cleaning of touch-surfaces such as door handles has been increased. Our site staff have been redeployed this week to further increase the cleaning of such surfaces and we have established a plan should we need to carry out a deep clean.

Scenarios

Over the past week we have been planning for a number of different scenarios.

1. Instruction to close the whole school for a limited period.
2. Instruction to limit the number of people in one place for a limited period.
3. Infection affects a member of our school community and a case is confirmed.
4. High levels of staff illness/absence, making it impossible to staff all classes.

Throughout our contingency planning, every attempt will be made to avoid disruption to learning; particularly for students in Year 11 who approach their examinations. We are sharing a basic summary of our current plans with you in the spirit of honesty and transparency and hope that you understand that they are subject to change as we respond accordingly to the different situations that we may encounter.

1. Instruction to close the whole school for a limited period.

Our teachers have been given guidance on how work will be set in this scenario. If we find ourselves in this scenario, we will issue specific instructions to pupils and parents/carers. We will use our school app, social media and website to inform you and to also inform you when the school would be reopened.

2. Instruction to limit the number of people in one place for a limited period.

In this scenario, we would focus on maintaining the provision for examination classes in Year 11. Pupils in other years would follow the plan outlined in scenario 1, whilst working from home.

3. Infection affects a member of our school community and a case is confirmed.

In this scenario, the school would have to follow direct guidance from Public Health England.

4. High levels of staff illness/absence, making it impossible to staff all classes.

In this scenario, the school can cope with a certain level of staff absence. If however, the levels of absence became too high, we would adopt a partial closure and redeploy staff to the teaching of examination classes, similar to scenario 2 above.

In order to plan for this situation, we are trying to increase our bank of supply and cover teachers and invigilation staff. We are currently recruiting for additional invigilation staff and this is an area where we would welcome support from our parent/carer community. If you have not previously considered this type of occasional work but would be willing to help, please contact Mrs Johnson (johnson@wyvernacademy.org) for further details.

Examinations

The advice from the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) at this time is to continue to prepare for exams and other assessments as normal. That latest guidance from the DfE indicates that Ofqual continues to work closely with exam boards, other regulators and the Department for Education to plan for a range of scenarios, as the public would expect. Their overriding priorities are fairness to students this summer and keeping disruption to a minimum.

Communication

During this period, we ask that parents continue to follow the normal absence procedures, contacting the school absence line on 01325 351377 by 9.30 am on the day of the absence, leaving a voicemail message if the absence line is busy. If you experience a suspected or confirmed case of Coronavirus in the family home, following advice from NHS 111, please also notify the school via the absence line on 01325 351377, leaving a voicemail message if the absence line is busy.

Other school events such as Parents Evening

We are currently running these events as normal, but will provide sanitiser for parent/carers and pupils who are attending the event and we have instructed our staff not to shake hands with parent/carers. Please do accept our apologies for this as we take great pride in meeting parents/carers and welcoming you to our school.

General Guidance

We will continue to encourage children to wash their hands more often than usual, for 20 seconds using soap and hot water and sanitise on arrival. Also, to reduce the spread of germs, we will continue to encourage children when they cough or sneeze, to cover their mouth and nose with a tissue, or their sleeve (not their hands) if they don't have a tissue, and throw the tissue away immediately. We are giving all teachers boxes of tissues so that they can support this advice and the Public Health England information posters are on display in classrooms and around school.

We hope that this letter updates you on our current planning whilst recognising that the landscape continues to evolve. Please be reassured that we will continue to make measured decisions in the best interests of the whole school community, whilst following the guidance provided by the DfE and Public Health England.

Thank you for your continued support and understanding as we plan for these potential scenarios.

Yours sincerely,



Mr J C Leader
Headteacher

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