



Backwell School

A National Teaching School

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17 March 2020

Dear Parents / Carers,

The scale and seriousness of the coronavirus situation is continuing to develop and no doubt you will have seen the latest government advice, which states:

- if you live alone and you have symptoms of coronavirus illness (COVID-19), however mild, stay at home for **7 days** from when your symptoms started.
- 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.
- Symptoms include a high temperature or a new and continuous cough. Anyone in this category showing any possible symptoms should follow the advice of Public Health England / the NHS (via the online service / NHS 111). Please do not call your local doctors surgery.
- The self-isolation guidance in full is available here:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance> .

I would ask that parents/carers make decisions regarding self-isolation for their own children – please do not ask the school for advice on this matter. If your child does need to self-isolate please report this to the school, via the absence line 01275 464188, with the expected date on which they will be able to return to school bearing in mind the advice above. You do not need to report the absence daily to us if you have declared self-isolation.

- schools should remain open at present, but all but non-essential activities are being strongly discouraged. Therefore we have cancelled all school trips and activities including concerts and parents' evenings until further notice. This also includes meetings with parents so it is likely discussions will be rearranged as a phone call. We will be in touch regarding Enrichment Week trip and activities in due course.

Backwell School remains open but is likely to see a greater level of absence from pupils and staff who fall into the categories above. This will put increasing strain on us but we are aiming to deliver as much normality as we can. Staff numbers may also be affected and so there may be changes to class teaching arrangements and we already have some plans in place for this.

If your child is ill/self-isolating you may want them to carrying on studying. You will appreciate that this situation is placing very challenging demands on staff time therefore staff are not able to set bespoke work for children who are absent from school. Year 11 and Year 13 students can revise for their upcoming exams (with the help of their personalized revision schedules) and other year groups can access Frog for text books as well as links to programmes such as HegartyMaths and Seneca. If, as a family, you are unable to access the internet at home please let us know as soon as possible.

Although the government has been clear that it is not yet the point for school closures we know that might come. We have been working to develop plans to support learning for our pupils in that event and shall have more information on that if it becomes necessary.

Public health advice remains that all hand washing etc. is more important than ever, students were reminded of this in Tutor Time/assemblies this morning. Please continue to help us reinforce this with our children and young people. Please be assured that our toilets are being checked regularly throughout the day for soap. Should your child notice that there is no soap in the toilet block, they need to report this immediately to a member of staff so that this can be rectified. Emails from parents on this matter are too late as the soap will have been refilled. The Trust is working very closely with our cleaning contractors to ensure that the school is as clean as possible and contingency plans are in place for a 'deep clean' if required.

I appreciate this is a worrying time for many. The wider Backwell School community has a responsibility to follow all government guidance on self-isolation and 'social distancing'. As it stands we are not aware of any confirmed cases of Coronavirus in the school. As the Government has ceased testing, except for those in a medical setting, it is unlikely that as a school we would be informed whether someone has the virus or not. Therefore it is essential that parents follow all guidance given to them by medical professionals, Public Health England and the Government and we are not able to confirm or deny any rumoured case in staff or students.

We are working incredibly hard, in a rapidly changing environment to keep all those in the school community informed and up to date. Our webpage is updated regularly so please do visit this for the latest information and guidance as well as reading written communication fully. I am sure you appreciate that we cannot deal with individual queries and concerns and this would, in fact, slow down our ability to communicate swiftly if required.

Thank you for your continued support on this matter, it is much appreciated this time of worry and challenge.

Yours sincerely,

Mr J Nunes
Headteacher