

10 March 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

I am writing to you to provide an update on how the school is responding to the Coronavirus. As you may well be aware, there are many different types of coronaviruses. A coronavirus is a type of virus common across the world. This version, novel coronavirus or COVID-19, first appeared in Wuhan, China in December 2019. Coronaviruses can cause illness in animals and humans.

I would like to reassure you that we receive daily updates from the Department of Education (DfE) and Public Health England to ensure we have the most up-to-date advice and information.

The Department for Education has established a coronavirus telephone helpline (0800 0468687) which is operational 0800-1800 Monday – Friday to answer your queries. You can also email:

DfE.coronavirushelpline@education.gov.uk

The latest advice and information about the virus and the situation in the UK can be found on the NHS website at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

We also have information to support you on our school website which can be seen in the link below. I am also placing the daily updates received from the DfE on our website.

<https://www.copleston.suffolk.sch.uk/coronavirusadvice>

I will continue to provide parents and students with regular updates via the school's website. We will also continue to post advice from the Department for Education and the Public Health England. Parents should contact NHS 111 if they have any concerns that their child is presenting symptoms of COVID-19. They will advise parents if they should make arrangements for their child to self-isolate.

What are the Government Plans ?

Emergency planning has to be ready for a number of possible scenarios. At present we are in the first phase of the crisis, which is containment. This requires every case to be treated in a specialist unit in a hospital, and all contacts of the patient to be traced and placed in quarantine for two weeks.

The second part of the Government's plan is delay. If COVID-19 can't be contained, and with its spread in the neighbouring European countries that may well be the case, then the plan is to delay the spread into the population until at least the end of the flu season, which is the end of this month, so that hospital capacity can be freed up to deal with the worst cases.

At the same time the Government is pouring all the resources necessary into research to try and find a vaccine.

What can be done to prevent and protect?

There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to the virus. There are general principles anyone can follow to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses, including:

- Washing your hands often – with soap and water, or use alcohol sanitiser if handwashing facilities are not available. This is particularly important after taking public transport.
- Covering your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throwing the tissue into a bin. The Government is running a 'Catch it, Bin it, Kill it' campaign to drum this message home.
- People who feel unwell should stay at home and should not attend work or any education or childcare setting.

The school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment

Pupils, students, staff and visitors should wash their hands:

- Before leaving home
 - On arrival at school
 - After using the toilet
 - After breaks and sporting activities
 - Before food preparation
 - Before eating any food, including snacks
 - Before leaving school
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands. This is difficult to do, as we do these things instinctively, but it is critical as picking up the virus on your hands from a surface and then transmitting it to your body through your face is a common way of catching the virus.
 - Avoid close contact with people who are unwell.
 - If you can, keep at least a metre (three feet) away from other people.
 - Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
 - This includes the screen on mobile phones, which should be cleaned with an anti-bacterial wipe twice a day. Mobile phones are a portable petri dish, accumulating bacteria and viruses. A recently published study estimates that viruses like COVID-19 may be able to persist for up to nine days on smooth glass and plastic surfaces, like a mobile screen.
- An alcohol-based sanitiser that contains at least 60% alcohol should be used if soap and water are not available.

If you are worried about your symptoms or those of a child or colleague, please call NHS 111. **Do not go directly to your GP or other healthcare environment.**

What is being done at Copleston to prepare?

The situation is continuing to change and therefore guidance regarding actions that should be taken for schools is being regularly updated. However, alongside the critical advice from the DfE and Public Health England the school continues to monitor closely the situation regarding COVID-19 and its potential impact on the day-to-day operation of the school. You will know, from daily press reports, that it is difficult to be sure of the full impact of COVID-19 at present, however, it seems prudent for us to put contingency plans in place in order to manage possible disruptions to schools.

The school is preparing for a number of possible scenarios which include:

- A student, or number of students are required to self-isolate.
- A number of staff are required to self-isolate
- The school is instructed to close by Public Health England

In formulating a response to these circumstances, the school has endeavoured to develop a response which may be sustained over the period of any disruption. In the event of ongoing disruption, the school will continue to keep these arrangements under review and, if necessary, modify them to ensure the continuity of education for students. It must be emphasised that these arrangements are merely prudent planning on behalf of the school and should not be a cause for alarm. The school has every confidence in the Public Health Authorities and will act in accordance with their advice. It is important that we maintain a measured and reasonable approach to managing the situation.

Should the school need to action any of these scenarios further details will be provided.

Many thanks for your support.

A Green
Principal