



**Monday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2020**

## **Coronavirus (Covid-19) - Update for Parents/Carers**

Dear Parents/Carers,

You will appreciate from the information that has been widely distributed over the weekend that the situation with regard to Coronavirus is rapidly changing.

Over the weekend, the school has made a number of contingencies to help ensure the health and well-being of all members of our community. The actions have been drafted with three key points in mind:

1. We are very conscious that we have a number of vulnerable individuals, students and staff, in our community due to underlying health conditions.
2. We have a duty to do what we can to limit the spread of the virus, particularly in the relatively close community that exists in and around Wells.
3. We wish to maintain as much education as possible for all students, but with particular awareness of the needs of students in Years 11 and 13 who have examinations this summer.

We have just listened to the government's updated advice. It is clear that, in addition to the staff and student absences that we had today, that we are likely to have a greater number of absences tomorrow. I have also spoken with Public Health on three occasions today to try to elicit more information given our circumstances.

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

In order to ensure that there are sufficient staff available, we are cancelling Year 12 lessons for tomorrow. This will allow us an opportunity to keep the remaining classes covered. Year 12 will be set work and will be allowed to come in to school to use our study and food facilities.

## **Remainder of the week**

In all of my conversations with Public Health, we have been advised to stay open. However, they recognise that staff absence may push us into a position where that cannot be sustained. It is likely that number of staff absences will increase and we may reach a point toward the middle or end of the week where we are unable to keep the school fully open. If that situation arises, we will try to keep the school open for Year 11 and Year 13 students in the first instance. We will keep you updated on this situation.

## **Student absence**

The government advice appears, at the time of writing, to remain consistent with the previous symptoms identified, but they have increased the isolation time. Please do not send your child to school if they are showing the symptoms, however mild, identified in the government advice:

**The most common symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are recent onset of:**

- **new continuous cough and/or**
- **high temperature**

If a child attends with these symptoms, or develops them during the school day, we will be phoning home to ask for immediate collection and keeping them away from other students whilst we await collection. We appreciate that this is a difficult judgement and would ask for your understanding that we may err on the side of caution.

If your child develops symptoms at home please do not send them into school for at least 14 days from the first day. So that we can ensure the safety of all our students please continue to contact Attendance to report your child's absence, simply advising us that they are in self isolation, on 01749 836210 or email [office@blue.somerset.sch.uk](mailto:office@blue.somerset.sch.uk).

### **Students with vulnerable health conditions**

I will be writing separately to you with regard to how the current guidance may affect you.

### **Other measures**

In addition to the extra sanitation processes that we informed you about last week, we are taking the following extra steps:

#### **Spring Concert, Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> March**

We are cancelling the concert planned for this Wednesday.

#### **Year 10 Parents' Evening, Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> March**

The parents' evening will be postponed until further notice. We intend to send out school reports for Year 10 shortly.

#### **School sport fixtures**

Sport fixtures will not run until further notice. This is a decision that has been made individually by the majority of Somerset schools.

#### **Assemblies**

We will not be holding assemblies up to Easter in order to reduce the number of mass gatherings that take place in school.

#### **Visitors**

We will continue to accept visitors on to the school site as there are numerous reasons why we need to see parents, carers or members of the community. However, we would ask that non-essential visits are avoided if at all possible.

#### **Other events**

All school events are under review.

### **Action in the event of a school closure**

The school is working on contingencies to deliver learning opportunities to students during such a closure period, using online platforms including Google Classroom and Kerboodle as well as activities that will not require use of IT equipment in the home. We do appreciate that not all our students will have access to IT equipment at home.

Our priority is to support students in Years 13 and 11 as they prepare for the summer exams, followed by Years 12 and 10 and then 9, 8 and 7. Staff are currently working on these plans and resources as well as continuing to deliver teaching at this time.

In the event of a closure, we will be communicating with students via their first-name.surname@theblueschoolwells.co.uk email address. We cannot communicate via other personal email addresses (or messaging apps) for reasons of safeguarding and data protection.

Students are being reminded of their login credentials in school and we ask if you could help with this by checking with your son and daughter that they know how to get access at home.

If it arises, a closure notice may come at short notice and, if you have not already, we ask you to think about your preparations for such if this eventuality arises.

To help us to be able to communicate effectively with you as parent/carer, please can we remind you to update us if your contact details have changed eg: mobile phone, email address. You can do this via our website at [https://www.theblueschoolwells.co.uk/section.php/66/1/update\\_your\\_contact\\_details](https://www.theblueschoolwells.co.uk/section.php/66/1/update_your_contact_details).

## Contact

We appreciate that this period is an anxious time. Please can we ask all members of the community to remain courteous and patient with school staff as we deal with the developing situation. Our response time to parents is likely to be longer than normal whilst we review all pieces of information available to us. We will advise you of any changes as soon as we are able to.

Finally, a reminder that the Government has an enquiries helpline for parents/carers, young people and school staff on **0800 046 8687**, open from 8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday. Alternatively, you can email: [DfE.coronavirus@education.gov.uk](mailto:DfE.coronavirus@education.gov.uk)

We are very grateful for the many messages of support that we have received.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Woodlock', enclosed within a circular scribble.

Mark Woodlock  
Headteacher