

“Here to make a difference”



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Dear Parents and Carers,

### Re: Coronavirus (COVID-19)

As you're probably aware, the government's guidance on the coronavirus has changed from the 'contain' phase to one of delaying the spread of the virus. We're getting in touch to let you know what we're doing in light of this, and what we expect from all of you, to help make sure our school community keeps safe and calm.

**This is a rapidly changing situation and the information given below is up to date as of 16<sup>th</sup> March 2020.**

We'd like to reassure you that at Benfieldside Primary School we take the health, safety and wellbeing of our pupils and staff very seriously, and, as such, we're taking all of the necessary steps to protect our community and are continuing to follow official guidance from Public Health England and the Department for Education (DfE), with updates available on our school website in the Coronavirus section.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19>

#### What's the current situation?

The **school remains open** – this is the current official guidance we've been given.

All educational functions continue to run as normal - this includes breakfast club. However **all after school and before school clubs are to be ceased, for the time being.**

Pupils **should attend** school unless they feel unwell – if your child has any of the following symptoms they **should remain at home for 7- 14 days** as per NHS 111 advice:

- a new, continuous cough and/or
- a temperature (37.8 degrees and above)

If your child is unwell, report this as you would normally by ringing the main school office.

The risk is currently low in County Durham, however to minimise the spread of any infection in school we are:

- Reinforcing handwashing routines and maintaining daily cleaning routines
- Cancelling all off site training to increase social distancing for all staff
- **Cancelling all visits and visitors at least until Easter**

#### What we need you to do

- If you've recently changed your contact details, please inform the school office **as soon as possible** via email or telephone.
- Talk to your children about the coronavirus. It's a scary time and we should make sure children feel supported. [BBC Newsround](#) has regular updates for younger children and [YoungMinds](#) has practical steps older children can take to help with anxiety.
- Come and collect your child straight away, if we ask you to (we'll contact you if they become ill with either a temperature or a new, continuous cough).
- Ask that you refrain from coming into the main building (not the Early Years Unit) unless absolutely necessary – including collection and drop off times.

#### Prevent the spread of infection

Make sure you and your children follow these general principles to prevent spreading any respiratory virus:

- › Wash your hands often – with soap and water and scrub for at least 20 seconds, or an alcohol-based sanitiser if soap and water aren't available
- › Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands
- › Avoid close contact with people who are unwell
- › If you feel unwell, stay at home and don't attend work or school
- › Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then place the tissue in a bin and then wash your hands
- › Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces in the home
- › If you're worried about your symptoms, please call NHS 111 – don't go directly to your GP or other healthcare environment

The most recent UK government advice is that anyone with a new continuous cough and a high temperature should self-isolate.

### **What happens if the school has to close?**

We'll only close if we're either officially advised to do so or we don't have enough staff to run the school.

In either case, we will:

- › Alert parents to the closure, via letter, Twitter, text message and a post on our website and the DCC website.
- › When we know, we will let parents know when the school will be reopened by using the same communications
  - › We are currently making plans for supporting your child's education should a closure become necessary. Teachers are preparing packs and we are increasing the educational links on our website so that pupils can continue to learn online. Please check the website daily for newly added content.

**Please keep in mind that we're only sending out this information to help the school community prepare. There are currently no plans to close.**

As I mentioned, we are following the guidance from Public Health England and the DfE, but this is being updated regularly in response to the changing situation. We will monitor and follow the national guidance as it is updated and would urge you to do the same.

Thank you for your continued support

Yours sincerely

Mrs Addison

Headteacher

Benfieldside Primary school