

Coastal Learning Partnership
Heathlands Primary Academy
Andrews Close
Springwater Road
Bournemouth
Dorset
BH11 8HB



01202 689418
office@coastalpartnership.co.uk

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Dear Parents and Carers

Coronavirus update

Welcome to my fourth consecutive letter on this most tricky of subjects! We really are in quite extraordinary times, dealing with a rapidly changing situation.

In my letter yesterday, I explained that our strategy is to keep in step with the emerging Government advice. Yesterday, the Government implemented a range of tough new measures and it is therefore necessary to review our own practice in response to this.

We remain committed to a sensible and proportionate approach but we will not risk the safety of our children and staff by not taking the latest advice seriously.

Symptoms and self-isolation

The requirement for self-isolation has now been extended to whole families. This means that if any single member of the household displays the coronavirus symptoms, the whole family must self-isolate for 14 days. This is to protect the wider community. The symptoms are described as a recent onset of:

- New continuous cough and/or
- High temperature (above 37.8°C)

Non-essential contact with others

Government advice is now very direct about the need to avoid non-essential contact with others. Therefore, with regret, our schools will be removing from the school day any particular events which significantly increase contact between children, if they can be avoided. For example, assemblies and collective worship will not take place until further notice. Similarly, schools will now be cancelling or postponing all events, with no exceptions, such as:

- Parents' evenings
- Concerts and performances
- School trips (residential or day trips)
- Sports fixtures

Pupil attendance

The position around attendance remains the same: most pupils should come to school as normal. Parents will need to determine if their child - or anyone else in the household - is symptomatic and then follow the new extended self-isolation guidance.

Parents should follow the usual procedures for notifying their child's absence. Please indicate clearly if your child's absence is through self-isolation related to their own symptoms or to those of another family member. Such absences will then be authorised for a period of 14 days. Parents are reminded that they should avoid keeping their children out of school as a 'precautionary' measure.

Normality of a school day

Despite all of this, we wish for our children to experience some normality at school, as far as is practical. The school day will remain broadly the same, with children attending their lessons and enjoying play times; wraparound childcare will continue as normal and we will continue to run after school clubs unless staffing levels make that impossible.

School closure

Although the Government has said that schools will not be closed 'for the moment', it feels likely that this will eventually happen and perhaps quite soon. For the meantime, schools will not close unless required to do so by Public Health England. Schools are already under pressure by staff shortages and yesterday's announcement will make this much more difficult. We will continue to manage these situations as best we can but parents should know that there may be some unavoidable risk to quality of learning in school and also that staff shortages may eventually require schools to make difficult decisions regarding partial or full closures.

'Business as usual' is becoming quite hard to maintain in the face of this growing situation. Nevertheless, our schools are open for business and we will do all we can to reduce children's anxiety levels at this difficult time.

Once again, I am grateful for the support and patience of our parents and for the commitment and endeavours of our staff.

Kinds regards



Paul Howieson

CEO, Coastal Learning Partnership