



13 March 2020

Dear Parents, Carers and Staff

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update

I am writing to inform you that I have received a report today that a student at Ashlyns has tested positive for the Coronavirus; as yet, this has not been confirmed to the school by Public Health England. However, given the circumstances, it seems prudent to proceed on the assumption of a positive test and the advice we have received has been provided on this basis. The last time the student was in school they were asymptomatic, and this was more than 72 hours ago. As such, the advice is that the school can continue to remain open and the student will self-isolate for a period of days before they are able to return. I'm sure you will understand this has been a distressing time for the family and will join me in wishing them a speedy recovery.

As I am sure you are aware, the government announced yesterday that we are moving out of the containment phase and into the delay phase of the response to the Coronavirus outbreak. As before, the advice remains that effective hand hygiene and using a tissue when coughing or sneezing are some of the most effective ways in which we can help reduce the spread of the virus.

However, the **advice regarding self-isolation** has changed. From this point, should staff or students display a high temperature or a new, continuous cough, they should self-isolate for 7 days, regardless of whether they have travelled to affected areas. This means people should stay at home and avoid all but essential contact with others for 7 days from the point of displaying mild symptoms, to help slow the spread of infection. It is not necessary to call 111 at this point; however, if there is no improvement after 7 days then the advice is that they should be called. For medical emergencies, the 999 service should still be used. Parents do not need additional evidence from their doctor, or Public Health England, for absence to be authorised in these circumstances.

Parents who are worried about children or close family members with serious underlying medical conditions should continue to liaise with their clinician, Public Health England or NHS111 (if they are concerned about risks) to get direct medical advice.

There has also been updated guidance regarding school trips, with new advice that overseas visits should be cancelled. This obviously has implications for the **Sports Tour to Holland**, due to take place in April and, possibly, some trips in the Summer Term. Parents/carers with children who are booked on the Sports Tour will be contacted directly in due course. I have also made the decision to postpone the **School Show**, The Addams Family, which was due to take place at the end of the month. Miss Welch will be in touch with ticket holders and those involved in the production. The **Year 7 Parent Teacher Consultation Evening**, which was due to take place on Thursday 19 March, is also postponed so that this time can be used to provide additional training for staff on the delivery of remote learning to students.

The introduction of **social distancing measures** may lead to the closure of schools in England in the near future. The school will continue with its planning for managing a remote curriculum, and contingency planning is underway regarding public examinations and coursework assignments. We recognise that if closure is necessary, this will have significant implications for many of our families with issues ranging from the loss of free school meals to problems for families finding suitable childcare. Obviously, we will continue to provide updates as the situation continues to develop and would ask that you only contact the school regarding the Coronavirus to provide information relating to your own family's health.

I'd like to take this opportunity, once again, to thank you for your continued support and understanding in these challenging and unprecedented times.

Yours sincerley

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shapland', written in a cursive style.

James Shapland
Headteacher