

Our Ref: JAH/MM

11th March 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

Many people are asking what our schools are doing about coronavirus and what we would do if a case of coronavirus/COVID-19 was confirmed locally, or in one of our schools.

The answer is that we follow the advice of the Department for Education and Public Health England who are advised by the experts. We are managing risk and have to be careful about the potential unintended consequences of decisions that public services such as schools could make.

Unless we are specifically advised otherwise by Public Health England, we will continue with our normal educational provision in our schools. Not to do so would put pupils' education at risk, and would put great stress on parents/carers, especially those who cannot work from home – e.g. people in health services, the emergency services, logistics, utilities, and every service that keeps us going.

Schools are also very aware that if we close for any reason, we potentially put children at risk in a different way when so many parents and carers have to go to work.

Therefore:

- **We follow the advice of Public Health England and** emphasise the importance of everyone taking **sensible precautions**:
 - Washing your hands thoroughly and frequently during the day;
 - Covering your mouth if you have a cough and using and then throwing away tissues, if you have a cough or sneeze.
- **Our cleaning staff will wipe down surfaces and clean toilets thoroughly as part of the normal cleaning regime.** This is why we emphasise the importance of people clearing their desks.
- **Teaching pupils**, in an age-appropriate way, about risk, being responsible and doing our best for the common good.

Parental Decisions

- If your child is ill and needs to stay off school, please inform your school as normal. If you suspect this may be coronavirus, follow the advice of Public Health England and isolate your child at home in a ventilated room, and make sure they have their own towels. Ring 111 for further advice.
- If your child has been in contact with someone who is **thought** to have coronavirus, there is no reason to keep them at home unless they are themselves showing symptoms, in which case, isolate them and take medical advice by ringing 111.
- If your child has been in contact with someone with **confirmed** coronavirus, follow Public Health England advice, isolate your child and contact 111.

School Actions/Decisions

- If a child in one of our schools or a member of staff is **confirmed** to have contracted the virus, **we will be advised by Public Health England.** Currently, the advice is that schools should not close. If that changes, we will follow the advice we are given. As explained

above, there are risks and other consequences which follow from our actions, so this is a decision that has to be proportionate and made as part of joined-up civil contingency. At this point, we will move onto "Working from Home" as follows:

- If **Blue Coat**, our secondary school, has to close for a period, teachers will set and mark work for pupils via Bloodle, as happens currently if we have a snow closure. This is already in place and will be particularly important for pupils taking public examinations this year. We are aiming to teach some lessons for exam classes via Skype.
- Our primary schools, **Mayfield and East Crompton St George's** will also update their Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs) with appropriate work for children to complete and will publish details of the kinds of activities children can do at home, including reading each day, keeping a diary, accessing specific educational websites and watching educational television programmes which they can share when back at school.

Please refer to the school's websites for more details.

Safeguarding

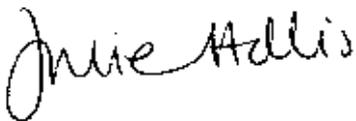
All our schools are putting in place measures to enable contact to be maintained with senior school staff (and through them external agencies) in case of a safeguarding need.

Working Together and Communications

In situations like this, where there are a lot of unknowns, it is particularly important that home and school work together, in the interests of our children, first and foremost, and also in the knowledge that there is a wider public interest for our children, and we must take advice from the experts. **We will inform parents and carers through our websites, emails and texts, if there are any changes.**

The most important thing is that we help each other by reinforcing sensible hygiene precautions at home and at school and talking to our children in a way that is age appropriate about risk, acting responsibly and thinking about the potential consequences of our actions for ourselves and others. It also means recognising that there are experts and people who manage issues which affect the general public and it is important to pull together and act upon their advice. Our schools may reach a point where everyone has to be sent home for a few days, but we are geared up for that, and we will continue to work to support our young peoples' education and safety.

Yours sincerely



JULIE HOLLIS
Chief Executive Officer
The Cranmer Education Trust

