

16th March 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

Further to the Trust's most recent coronavirus (COVID-19) update, please see below the latest DfE guidance:

DfE general guidance for schools:

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

Preventing the spread of infection

1. Section 3 of the above DfE guidance relates to preventing the spread of infection. We thank staff, students, and parents for supporting our efforts to maintain hygiene standards.
2. Our cleaning contractors and site staff are also responding to government guidelines to help us in this task.
3. The most important thing individuals can do to protect themselves is to wash their hands more often, for at least 20 seconds, with soap and water. Public Health England recommends that in addition to handwashing before eating, and after coughing and sneezing, everyone should also wash hands after using toilets and travelling on public transport.

DfE guidance for schools with specific reference to school trips:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19/covid-19-travel-guidance-for-the-education-sector>

School trips abroad:

1. The DfE has advised against sending pupils abroad on school trips. The Trust team is working with the academies and the various school travel companies to resolve all matters relating to foreign trips scheduled to take place in the current academic year.

Domestic (UK and day visits) school trips and events:

1. The DfE is not currently advising against domestic school trips; we are reviewing the risk assessments of those that are taking place during the rest of the current academic year.

2. Academies are reviewing their own programmes and will inform you as soon as possible if changes are to be made.
3. The priority in our decision making is that staff are in school to support the pupils and maintain operational effectiveness.

DfE guidance for those staying at home:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance>

Further guidance

1. The government will now be holding daily press conferences and we will ensure that any consequent changes to the DfE website are communicated to you.
2. It should be noted that the self-isolation period has currently been reduced by the government from 14 days to 7 days.
3. It is important to note that the government has not announced plans for school closure.
4. We are, however, mindful of the need to monitor the positions of our own academies and their individual ability to maintain organisational effectiveness. Academies will do this daily and notify you directly if they need to make partial or more widespread changes to their educational provision.
5. The examination season begins next term. Our exam officers have completed pupil entries and are in the process of completing seating plans. Planning will continue. We expect to receive further DfE guidance on this in the near future.

IT facilities:

1. In our secondary academies, the use of Citrix, SharePoint, Office 365, Outlook, academy websites, and a range of DfE and commercial revision packages will be central to high quality provision in the event of a need for pupils to work remotely at home. Pupils are already familiar with many remote applications that are currently in use.
2. Our secondary academies will provide guidance on how to work remotely should the need arise.
3. In our primary academies and our special academy, the Headteachers will communicate local arrangements with you directly.

Further communications:

The Trust will:

1. Continue to provide links to future DfE updates.
2. Notify you of any organisational changes it plans to make as a result of DfE guidance.

Finally:

Please do not hesitate to speak to academy staff if you have any concerns or observations - these are exceptional times and your views are valued.

We are grateful to parents and pupils for their continued support.

Yours faithfully

Mr R Reeve

Director of Welfare