



St. Mary's Catholic Primary School, Birchley

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Dear Parents/Guardians,

As we reach the middle of what is proving to be a challenging week for all members of society, I am writing to update you all with regards to what is happening here at St. Mary's.

Until we receive formal notification of closure, school will remain open for all staff and pupils. We do not, as yet, have any confirmed cases of Coronavirus within the school community and although several of our children, and a couple of members of staff, are absent, this is due to them having to self-isolate as a result of members of their family having either a new continuous cough and/or high temperature.

We are following advice from Public Health England and the LA and are ready to alter/adapt school life in response to the latest recommendations.

If your child, or anyone else in your family, has a high temperature and/or a new, continuous cough then they, and the rest of the family, should self-isolate for 14 days.

We are aware that many of our children are becoming increasingly worried about the dangers of the virus and we are doing our utmost to deliver a 'normal' school day to them. We are working hard to keep their minds busy and are taking time to ensure that they feel safe and happy.

We still have enough members of staff present in school to teach the children in their existing classes and they are still able to follow their usual curriculum. If staffing levels fall we may, in the future, need to adapt our curriculum and become more flexible in our teaching approaches.

In order to enable our children to be as safe as possible in school, we are asking all of them to wash their hands upon entry into the building and at several vital points throughout the school day e.g. before snack time and lunch.

We are keeping visitors into school to a minimum and all visitors are also asked to wash their hands before working with our children.

Unfortunately we have had to cancel sporting events this week and our Y4 trip to Chester next week, but we hope to rearrange these events in the future.

Our new morning drop off procedures mean that parents are able to maintain a social distance from each other as many parents simply leave their child at the school gate now and children are entering school in a constant trickle rather than as a large group.

Home time seems to be more problematic in that parents are waiting around on the playground for children to be released. To help with this, we are planning to release any Infant child (who does not have Junior siblings) at 3.15pm from tonight (Wed 18th March) so that they and their parents can leave the playground before the parents of the Junior children arrive. We do ask that you leave promptly and that you don't stay to chat or let your children play on the play equipment in the school grounds. If you have an Infant child who has a Junior sibling, they can be collected from their classroom door at the normal time. Junior children will be dismissed at 3.30pm and we ask that their parents only come onto the playground at 3.25pm in order to reduce contact with others. Again, we ask that you leave promptly after collecting your child.

If school does have to close we will inform you as soon as possible. Staff are currently working hard to prepare Home Learning Packs for the children so that they are able to continue their education at home – if school closes. The packs will contain a mix of pencil and paper tasks; additional reading books; project work and online activities. We would ask that all school reading books are kept safe at home and returned to us once school re-opens, as we simply do not have the stock to write off all of the additional books being sent home. School will also publish, on its website, details of further online activities and websites for you and your children to access throughout the closure.

I will continue to update you, as and when, things change, but for now take care.

Best wishes.

A Hymers

Mrs Andrea Hymers
Headteacher

