

17<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

I apologise to be writing to you again but we are in unprecedented times, the situation and guidance is changing at such a pace it is extremely difficult to ensure we are keeping you up to date.

Firstly, please see below the latest “Stay at home guidance for households with possible coronavirus (Covid-19) infection” which was issued by the Government yesterday. The key messages from the update are:

- ***If you live alone and you have symptoms of coronavirus illness (Covid-19), however mild, stay at home for 7 days from when your symptoms started.***
- ***If you live with others and you or one of them have symptoms of coronavirus, then all household members must stay at home and not leave the house for 14 days. The 14-day period starts from the day when the first person in the house became ill.***
- ***It is likely that people living within a household will infect each other or be infected already. Staying at home for 14 days will greatly reduce the overall amount of infection the household could pass on to others in the community.***
- ***For anyone in the household who starts displaying symptoms, they need to stay at home for 7 days from when the symptoms appeared, regardless of what day they are on in the original 14-day isolation period.***

Many of you will be struggling to adapt to this advice (in the same way we are) as it differs to that provided by the Government on Monday. We are doing our best to adhere to this advice with regard to pupils and staff and I ask you for your support in this.

Please follow the school's absence procedures as previously explained, identifying if your child is displaying Covid-19 symptoms or that they are staying home due to the “household isolation” guidance above. If your child is ill / injured for other reasons, e.g. stomach complaint please specifically identify that. In order to safeguard all members of the school community, the reasons for absence are critical. If the reason for non-attendance is related to Covid-19 we would not expect your child to return to school until the criteria above are satisfied.

We are aware that in a minority of cases, pupils have chosen to take advantage of this challenging situation by suddenly “displaying symptoms” and as a result, we requested they be collected from school. We have tried to stress the significance of this to pupils, as it requires the entire family to be isolated for 14 days. If your child has been collected and **you are certain** that they have applied a certain “dramatic license”, I would be happy for them to return to school and continue lessons as before. However, if there were any doubt on your part I would ask you to keep them at home and follow the guidance above and contact the absence line accordingly. If tomorrow (18/03/20) and after, any pupils who are required to be collected will not be allowed back into school until restrictions above are met, this will include siblings at GTS and other schools. I therefore request your support and integrity in trying to help manage the challenge the school, local and global community face at this time.

Today you will have received a detailed letter outlining all of the various means of communication and educational provision. At this point I would simply ask you to ensure that you and your child(ren) are able to access all the various platforms available. The essential ones being; Email, Show My Homework (SMHW), Portico and SAM learning.

At this stage, we are working hard to continue education at GTS and we are not switching to online/remote provision. If pupils are currently at home we recommend that time is spent completing homework and checking SMHW for those lessons that are continuing, working on BBC Bitesize and other generic learning resources, there is a wealth of learning resources online. If and when the school is instructed to shut we will switch to an online/remote provision; at this stage we do not have the resources or capacity to do both.

In the eventuality of a school closure, we will provide detailed instructions on how to utilise the resources available and what the expectations are of pupils. Until that point, the school is focusing on its core purpose i.e. providing an education within the school environment.

We have a number of issues to address as all schools do and we will prioritise them as required.

I apologise in advance if you receive a daily update from me but I do feel communication is critical in these challenging times. Once again, I thank you in advance for your support and integrity.

Yours faithfully



Andy Bloodworth  
Headteacher