



Highwood Primary School,  
Fairwater Drive,  
Woodley,  
READING,  
Berkshire.  
RG5 3JE

Tel: 0118 926 5493

Email: [admin@highwood.wokingham.sch.uk](mailto:admin@highwood.wokingham.sch.uk)  
[www.highwood.wokingham.sch.uk](http://www.highwood.wokingham.sch.uk)

Head Teacher: Mr M Hickey BA(Ed), PE QTS

March 16, 2020

Dear Parents / Carers,

The government is planning to give us daily updates in relation to the coronavirus situation. My aim is to summarise anything that comes from the government which has a direct impact on our school, so you have all the up to date information and how it might impact your child/ren's schooling over the coming days, weeks and months.

I have just watched the Prime Minister's speech (4:45pm on 16/03/2020) and the latest advice has been updated. The symptoms to look out for remain the same:

- **A temperature over 37.8°c** or
- **A new and persistent cough.**

The isolation advice has significantly changed to the following:

- **If you live in a household with someone who is showing symptoms, you are to isolate the entire household for 14 days.**

Now, although the Prime Minister also mentioned avoiding non-essential contact and working from home if possible, the message is still that **schools are to remain open at this stage**. Obviously, the change in advice around household isolation is likely to have a significant impact on our staffing capacity and Highwood's ability to provide a safe setting for your children to attend. This will be a fast-moving situation, so please keep an eye out for all updates from school.

We will aim to stay open while we are being directed to do so by the government, but should our workforce numbers be too low to be able to safeguard all Highwood children, then I may be forced to take the decision to close the school despite the government's current directives.

Today, we have had an increase of children being kept at home. As a school, we want to be able to support parents with the decisions made around your children's health, but we still have a duty of care and certain safeguarding procedures we need to follow. To help us with this process, we would like all parents to:

- Be clear in your communication with school if you are self-isolating your household
- Give as much detail about any absence when communicated via phone / text / email

If you are isolating your household, then we **would not expect your child to be in school for a period of 14 days** and therefore we would not be contacting you on a daily basis to obtain an update. All other illness absences will be followed up with our usual procedures. We sent a series of attendance monitoring letters last week to families and I want to reassure parents that our monitoring procedures will obviously take into account the current situation.

We have also had a number of parents asking our advice in relation to whether the children should be in school. In this circumstance, you need to trust your instinct as a parent and follow the advice of 111 through their phone line or website. I have instructed the admin team to direct parents back to the 111 information, so that you, as parents, are making the correct, informed decision for your own children.

Further actions Highwood is taking:

- Assemblies have been postponed to the limit the ‘mass gatherings’ we have during the school day.
- I have contacted Caterlink, our school meal provider, to establish whether or not school meals for our free school meal children (those eligible for Pupil Premium funding) could still be provided if a school closure was required. Caterlink have confirmed that, providing they have the staff capacity and a kitchen to cook in, they will continue to provide this service.
- Headteachers across the Woodley schools are in daily contact, so that we are aware of the decisions each school is making and where our efforts can be combined to benefit the whole Woodley community.
- Swimming has been cancelled.
- We are also postponing the Year 3 / 4 Easter performance – this is likely to be rescheduled during the summer term.

I will update you in tomorrow’s communication with decisions around the following events:

- Year 1’s trip to LegoLand
- Friends of Highwood’s Easter Trail
- Year 5’s trip to Ufton Court

The reason for this slight delay, is that I want to be able to make contact with the people involved to make sure I am giving you all the right information about whether they will be cancellations or postponements.

Please bear with me during this very hectic and extremely challenging situation. My sole aim is to prioritise the health and safeguarding needs for our whole school community. I am acutely aware that the decisions I make will impact some of you more than others, but please be assured that they are made with a significant amount of thought with all the information I have at the time.

Thank you for your support.



Matt Hickey  
Headteacher  
Highwood Primary School