

Dear parent/carer

A school has closed in Chester this week following the return of a school trip from Italy. Although the World Health Organisation have not yet declared that COVID-19 (Corona Virus) is a pandemic, I am sure that you would like to be reassured of preventative measures that we are taking as a school.

First of all, the Department for Education have issued updated guidance on the Corona virus which can be found here.

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

The most important section is Section 3 which is advice about how to prevent the spread of the virus. We have reproduced this here:

3. Preventing spread of infection

There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to the virus.

There are general principles anyone can follow to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses, including:

- *washing your hands often - with soap and water, or use alcohol sanitiser if handwashing facilities are not available. This is particularly important after taking public transport*
- *covering your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throwing the tissue in a bin. See [Catch it, Bin it, Kill it](#)*
- *people who feel unwell should stay at home and should not attend work or any education or childcare setting*
- *pupils, students, staff and visitors should wash their hands:*
 - *before leaving home*
 - *on arrival at school*
 - *after using the toilet*
 - *after breaks and sporting activities*
 - *before food preparation*
 - *before eating any food, including snacks*
 - *before leaving school*
- *use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available*
- *avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands*
- *avoid close contact with people who are unwell*
- *clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces*
- *if you are worried about your symptoms or those of a child or colleague, please call NHS 111. Do not go directly to your GP or other healthcare environment*
- *see further information on the [Public Health England Blog](#) and the [NHS UK website](#).*

They have also issued guidance about what action should be taken if you have travelled to areas that have been affected as follows:

Returning travellers

Based on the scientific advice of the [Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies \(SAGE\)](#) the UK Chief Medical Officers are advising anyone who has travelled to the UK from mainland China, Thailand, Japan, Republic of

Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia or Macau in the last 14 days and is experiencing cough or fever or shortness of breath, to stay indoors and call NHS 111, even if symptoms are mild.

We are carrying out enhanced monitoring of direct flights from these areas. Passengers will be told how to report any symptoms they develop during the flight, at the time of arrival, or after leaving the airport. These areas have been identified because of the volume of air travel from affected areas, understanding of other travel routes and number of reported cases. This list will be kept under review.

If you have returned from these specific areas since February 19, you should call NHS111 and stay indoors and avoid contact with other people even if you do not have symptoms:

- *Iran*
- *Specific lockdown areas in Northern Italy as designated by the Government of Italy (see below)*
- *Special care zones in South Korea as designated by the Government of the Republic of South Korea*
- *Hubei province (returned in the past 14 days)*

If you have returned from these areas since February 19th and develop symptoms, however mild, you should stay indoors at home and avoid contact with other people immediately and call NHS111. You do not need to follow this advice if you have no symptoms.

- *Northern Italy (defined by a line above, and not including, Pisa, Florence and Rimini),*
- *Vietnam*
- *Cambodia*
- *Laos*
- *Myanmar*

Coronavirus risk in northern Italy



The specific lockdown areas of Italy are indicated below:

The government has said any Britons who have been to 11 quarantined towns in Italy must self-isolate.

The quarantined towns in Italy are:

Bertonico, Casalpuusterlengo, Castelgerundo, Castiglione d'Adda, Codogno, Fombio, Maleo, San Fiorano, Somaglia, Terranova dei Passerini - all in Lodi province in Lombardy - and Vo' Euganeo in Padova province, Veneto.

And anyone who has been north of Pisa is asked to stay at home for 14 days if they develop flu-like symptoms.

If your child is affected by any of this guidance please contact school to let us know.

At Balshaw's we are acting upon the first two principles of preventing the spread of respiratory viruses. Every classroom is to be provided with its own hand sanitiser (hand sanitiser is already available for use at key points in the school such as the Pastoral Hub, the Resources Hub and outside the School Office). Each classroom will also have a box of tissues so that students are able to follow the [Catch it, Bin it, Kill It](#) advice.

Hopefully this is much more than is necessary, but it is better to take preventative measures than to have to deal with a genuine risk.

Kind regards,



Mr Steven Haycocks

HEADTEACHER

BALSHAW'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND HIGH SCHOOL

Your Word is a lamp for my feet and a light on my path. (Psalm 119, vs 105)