



Saint Thomas More R.C. Primary School

Senior Leadership Team
Headteacher, Joanne Butterworth, Deputy Headteacher: Anna Quigg
Assistant Headteacher: Sarah Dodd

Wednesday March 2020

Dear Parent/ Carer

Re: Coronavirus concerns

I understand that there are concerns regarding the outbreak of coronavirus and would like to share with you the latest advice from Public Health England that can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-information-for-the-public#advice-for-travellers>

At St Thomas More R.C Primary School, we take the health and safety of our pupils and staff very seriously, and I would like to reassure you that there is currently no cause for concern at the school. We have discussed the advice of regularly washing hands with the children, including humming Happy birthday to ensure they are washing them for the appropriate time.

Information about the virus

A coronavirus is a type of virus. As a group, coronaviruses are common across the world. COVID-19 is a new strain of coronavirus first identified in Wuhan City, China in January 2020. The incubation period of COVID-19 is between 2 and 14 days. This means that if a person remains well 14 days after contact with someone with confirmed coronavirus, it is unlikely that they have been infected.

The following symptoms may develop in the 14 days after exposure to someone who has COVID-19 infection:

- cough
- difficulty in breathing
- fever

Generally, these infections can cause more severe symptoms in people with weakened immune systems, older people, and those with long-term conditions like diabetes, cancer and chronic lung disease. There is no evidence that children are more affected than other age groups - very few cases have been reported in children.

How COVID-19 is spread

From what we know about other coronaviruses, spread of COVID-19 is most likely to happen when there is close contact (within 2 metres) with an infected person. It is likely that the risk increases the longer someone has close contact with an infected person. Droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes (termed respiratory secretions) containing the virus are most likely to be the most important means of transmission

There are 2 routes by which people could become infected:

- secretions can be directly transferred into the mouths or noses of people who are nearby (within 2 metres) or could be inhaled into the lungs
- it is also possible that someone may become infected by touching a surface or object that has been contaminated with respiratory secretions and then touching their own mouth, nose, or eyes

There is currently no good evidence that people who do not have symptoms are infectious to others.

We Love, We Learn, We Live with Christ

P.T.O.

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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 - '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:
 - o before leaving home
 - o on arrival at school
 - o after using the toilet
 - o after breaks and sporting activities
 - o before food preparation
 - o before eating any food, including snacks
 - o before leaving school
- 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.

Face masks for the general public, students, or staff are not recommended to protect from infection, as there is no evidence of benefit from their use outside healthcare environments.

People who have returned from Category 1 specified countries/areas in the last 14 days should self-isolate. This includes avoiding attending an education setting or work until 14 days after they return.

People who have returned from Category 2 specified countries/areas in the last 14 days, are advised to stay at home if they develop symptoms. All other pupils or students and staff should continue to attend school or university, including their siblings attending the same or a different school (unless advised not to by public health officials).

Yours faithfully,

Mrs J A Butterworth

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