

UNITED SCHOOLS FEDERATION

St. Michael's C. of E. Nursery & Primary School St. Catherine's C. of E. VA Primary School
St. Mary's C. of E. VA Primary School Marldon C. of E. VA Primary School
Ipplepen Primary School and Stokeinteignhead School



17th March 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

Following the recent advice that the Government announced today, I am writing to provide you with an update about our response to the current and ever-changing situation.

Firstly, can I please reassure you that we are taking the situation extremely seriously and have been following the guidance and advice that we have received from Public Health England, the DfE and the Local Authority. The children have been given lessons in effective handwashing and are being supported in doing this regularly and frequently throughout the day.

We have been asked to keep schools open and will do our very best to comply, until the situation changes. There are, however, some circumstances which may result in the need to close either part or all of the school and I have highlighted such circumstances below.

Please can I ask that you ensure you are registered on our Parent Pay system and your details are up to date, including your latest mobile phone number. This will be the way we communicate with you with regard to changes in the current situation, provide any information about school closures and update you during the time any closures take place, should this occur.

The guidance changed yesterday with regard to self-isolation and avoiding unnecessary social contact.

The latest guidance is available on the NHS website at:
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

- If a member of your family develops a new dry cough (less than a week old) and/or has a raised temperature, that person and the people they live with will need to isolate at home, please see the guidance above.
- Any child that develops a dry cough or temperature during the school day will need to be **collected immediately** from school and the point above will apply.
- All unessential visitors to school will have their visits cancelled.
- All whole school or key stage **assemblies will be cancelled** and children will instead have assemblies in their classrooms.
- **Parents' evenings this term will now not be taking place** and be delayed until later in the year.



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- **Unfortunately**, school performances/grandparents afternoons and all other events involving parents and members of the wider community will be cancelled.
- **Sporting fixtures, swimming lessons, visits and school trips will be cancelled until further notice.**
- Residential visits will remain under review for children in Years 2/4/6 as these are not due to happen for a few months yet. Although we have paid the deposits, no further payments are being made at the current time, so that this money can be refunded, should they need cancelling. We will do all we can to recover the deposits, if necessary. Admin staff are currently looking at insurances and finance in relation to all cancelled activities of this type, to see if we can recover the costs. Deposits are non-refundable, however if the school is able to reclaim we will let you know and arrange repayment.

None of these decisions have been taken lightly and all have been made after careful consideration.

At this time, our hope is that our schools will not need to close unless the Government decide to close all schools. That said, I am aware that it is likely staff will be off work for up to 14 days at a time, should they need to isolate. As a result, it is more than possible that we will need to alter or reduce the provision that is available. It is likely that decisions in relation to this will need to be made on a day by day basis, as the full extent of the impact of coronavirus becomes apparent. The types of alterations and restrictions that **might** occur are:

- Simplifying the school lunch menu, should we be short on kitchen staff or food supplies.
- Teaching children in larger groups, if teachers are absent.
- Running activities outside of the planned curriculum if teaching staff are absent but support staff are present.
- Only opening certain parts of the school if there are shortages in staff numbers.
- Reducing the length of the school day if staff shortages means that being open full time is impossible.
- Providing work and online resources to children who cannot attend school either due to being self-isolated or due to the school being closed.

Any decisions of this type would only be made if they were absolutely necessary and only after suitable risk assessments had been completed.

As and when I receive further news, I will of course communicate that with you. In the meantime, please can I request that you support the school by following the guidance contained in this letter.

Can I also request that you are mindful of vulnerable members of our community, such as grandparents and those with compromised immune systems, when dropping off and collecting your children. **Please also be mindful to avoid unnecessary social contact during this time.**

Fortunately, coronavirus appears to be well tolerated by children and so we are hopeful that the impact on their health will be very limited. That said, we will continue to work with all of our children in keeping themselves safe through handwashing and other basic hygiene actions. If you have any questions or concerns then please do get in contact with your Head of School, visit the NHS 111 website <https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19> or by contacting the DFE helpline on 0800-0468687



Thank you for your support at this challenging time.

Kind regards.

Martin Harding
Executive Headteacher
United Schools Federation



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