



BELMONT GROSVENOR *School*

Swarcliffe Hall
Birstwith
Harrogate
HG3 2JG

TELEPHONE:
01423 771029

16th March 2020

Dear Parents,

Thank you for your understanding over the past week, supporting school with our preventative measures to 'contain' and 'delay' the spread of coronavirus.

This morning, and running into the afternoon, our school Governing Body met to discuss continuity plans for the coming weeks, including our provision of ongoing education should we be forced – by government or pupil/staff illness – to close.

It was agreed that we will continue to:

- **follow the guidelines supplied to us from the Department for Education (DfE) and share with you the daily updates containing latest advice from the government and health experts.** We will publish those on our school website on a new, dedicated page to avoid email bombardment. The DfE have also launched a helpline to answer questions about COVID-19 related to education 0800 0468 687.

Today's advice for schools, you will read is, in the main, the same as it appeared last Friday despite the national rise in confirmed cases:

- **Schools must stay open, with pupil attendance as mandatory** unless they are showing symptoms of the virus – new, continuous cough or high temperature
- **In cases where a member of the family shows symptoms of coronavirus, the entire family must self-isolate for 14 days**
- Pupils or staff becoming unwell with initial symptoms whilst at school will be **sent home immediately**
- **Frequent disinfecting** of surfaces taking place during the day
- **Handwashing for 20 seconds**, frequent use of sanitiser and tissues

It is a legal requirement for parents to send their children to school and a legal requirement for schools to keep a meticulous record of attendance and absence. We have now been given strict guidelines on how to manage and record pupil absence in light of the pandemic.

If you chose to keep your child away from school, despite the advice from the government, then the absence must be communicated with the office via admin@belmontgrosvenor.co.uk. I urge you, please, to be honest in providing the reason behind your decision. Your email will be kept strictly confidential. If you are self-isolating as a prevention because a family member is ill or has been tested as positive for coronavirus, then please say so. If you are taking measures to protect your family in a different way, ie keeping the children at home to avoid contact with others, then please tell us. I am charged with the responsibility of authorising absences and can only do this if we have a clear picture. Thank you in advance for your help on this matter.

Please note that in instances where **non-infected families choose** to keep asymptomatic children away from school, or **families are forced to keep children away from school in isolation** because a family member has symptoms of coronavirus, work will be sent home to pupils as in normal instances of short-term absence. This will be in the form of 'homework' via access to our educational subscriptions including 'Timestables Rockstar', 'Espresso' and 'Spelling Shed', daily reading and book reviews as part of our 'Battle of the Books'. Additional tasks may be sent home by the classteacher in individual cases.

Remote learning will only be provided in the eventuality of school closure, where physical closure of buildings is necessary. If the operational capability of providing ongoing education is unaffected then it will be done so by virtual means. At that time, remote learning packs will be sent home. In this instance, teachers will be working, albeit away from the school building, and will be available to parents via email contact during school hours. **Work sent home during a mandatory school closure will be compulsory, will be monitored, collated and marked by teachers where applicable.**

At BGS we are doing our very best to continue to provide and care for our pupils, adhering to the government stipulations. Teaching and learning will go on as normal, including all games, swimming and PE.

The *additional* measures taking place to safeguard the school community include:

- All children will be asked to **wash hands on arrival** at school after hanging up coats and bags
- **Parents of nursery children** are asked to take the basal temperatures of their children before setting off to nursery. A raised temperature is an initial symptom of coronavirus along with many other minor childhood illnesses and youngsters must be kept at home.
- Sectional **assemblies will be removed from timetable**. (Pre-Prep, Upper School, Whole School)
- **Interschool fixtures** – home or away matches involving other schools - will not go ahead
- **Trips and visits are postponed** until further notice
- Visitors to school must adhere to our strict **visitor protocols**

Mrs Shea will be leading our staff meeting tomorrow evening where we will be preparing a creative and challenging pack of activities for every child. This will involve some 'screen time' activities including applications and online learning along with written/paper activities to be downloaded at home.

Ahead of a *possible* mandatory closure, we will be sending out a survey for you to fill in regarding your home ICT setup. We need to know those households who may struggle with **internet access, printers or hardware availability/capability**. For our ongoing child protection measures, we will also be asking that you confirm your parental controls/settings/firewalls are in place in order that your children are kept safe when working online. Mrs Shea and our ICT technician, James Sotherton, will do their best to provide support in preparing every family for remote learning.

Thank you for your co-operation and for doing all that you can to help keep your children calm and happy during this exceptionally difficult time.

Yours sincerely and with best wishes,



Mrs Sophia Ashworth Jones
Headmistress