



St Joseph's R.C. Primary School
Coast Road, Blackhall, Hartlepool, TS27 4HE
Tel/Fax: 0191 586 4308
Head Teacher: Mrs L Ashton
Chair of Governors: Mr P Francis



16th March 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

Re: Coronavirus

I am writing to update you about the school's current position regarding Coronavirus.

We take the health and safety and wellbeing of our pupils and staff very seriously, and, as such, we want to reassure you that **we are following the guidance from Public Health England and the Department for Education (DfE).**

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

While there are no confirmed cases of the virus in school, some family members are self-isolating.

The risk is currently low in County Durham, however to minimise the spread of any infection in school we are:

- Hand washing more frequently, reminding children regularly about how to wash their hands.
- Adults entering school are being asked to use antibacterial handwash
- Antibacterial cleaning products are being used throughout school.
- We have posters around school reminding everyone of the importance of hygiene.

All events where there would be a number of people gathering, including Masses, liturgies and assemblies are cancelled until further notice. This includes Stay and Play on a Wednesday morning.

Trips out of school will currently not go ahead and we will update you about our planned residential visit when we have further information.

We would ask that where possible, all correspondence with school is made via telephone or email using the following address stjosephsblackhall@durhamlearning.net

If anyone in your family is showing symptoms outside of school hours, please follow the NHS guidelines and contact school via the email address above.

If circumstances arise where the school must close, we will inform you in our usual way via text, website or possibly letter.

We are currently making plans for supporting your child's education should a closure become necessary and will keep you informed on this.

Respect, friendship, excellence, care

Prevent the spread of infection

Make sure you and your children follow these general principles to prevent spreading any respiratory virus:

- Wash your hands often – with soap and water and scrub for at least 20 seconds, or an alcohol-based sanitiser if soap and water aren't available
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- Avoid close contact with people who are unwell
- If you feel unwell, stay at home and don't attend work or school
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then place the tissue in a bin and then wash your hands
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces in the home
- If you're worried about your symptoms, please call NHS 111 – don't go directly to your GP or other healthcare environment

The most recent UK government advice is that anyone with a new continuous cough and a high temperature should self-isolate for seven days.

If you or your children have returned from abroad in the last 14 days, please follow the link below for advice about category 1 and 2 countries.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-specified-countries-and-areas/covid-19-specified-countries-and-areas-with-implications-for-returning-travellers-or-visitors-arriving-in-the-uk>

Symptoms to look out for

If you've returned from any of the category 1 or 2 areas or countries, look out for the following symptoms:

- Cough
- Difficulty in breathing
- Fever (a temperature of 38 degrees C or higher)
- Stay indoors and avoid contact with other people as you would with other flu viruses. Please see the link below for information about self-isolation.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-self-isolation-for-patients-undergoing-testing/advice-sheet-home-isolation>

- Call NHS 111 immediately for an assessment (or 999 if you require emergency medical attention)

As I mentioned, we are following the guidance from Public Health England and the DfE, but this is being updated regularly in response to the changing situation. We will monitor and follow the national guidance as it is updated and would urge you to do the same.

If you or your child have any further concerns or questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at any time.

Thank you for your support
Yours sincerely,

Mrs L Ashton
Headteacher