

18<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

Like you, we are all concerned about the impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) on the community and our usual way of life.

I hope that the information that the school has been posting on its website/newsfeed on a daily basis has been useful for families. This is a rapidly changing situation and, as you will appreciate, schools are having to adapt to a shifting context and respond to new directives from the Government as these are made available.

I would like to assure you that the school is following all of the Government's guidance on this issue. For the time being, schools are being asked to stay open – although I am mindful that by the time you read this letter it is possible that the situation may have changed. As a school community, we will endeavour to remain open for as long as we are asked to do so; and we take pride in knowing that we are supporting the wider community by doing so. The message that we are saying to our children is that it's "business and learning as usual" and, while adapting some of our school routines, we are trying to maintain them on their behalf as far as possible.

However, we also recognise that to operate safely we need to have appropriate numbers of staff on site; now that the Government's advice on self-isolation has been updated, it is more likely that staff capacity will reduce. If, as a result, we do need to partially close or close, then we will inform parents as soon as possible. In such circumstances, teachers will endeavour to set work for pupils via the Google Classrooms System.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-social-distancing-and-for-vulnerable-people/guidance-on-social-distancing-for-everyone-in-the-uk-and-protecting-older-people-and-vulnerable-adults>

I would also kindly ask families to be mindful that we are asking a lot of Springfield's staff – both teaching and support staff – at present. Staff are covering the duties and classes of absent colleagues and this impacts upon their time, availability and well-being; they are focusing on maintaining lessons and learning at school. As a result, we may not be able to be as responsive to the individual requests of families as we might like. We would be grateful if you would only contact the school directly when it is essential to do so and, if you need advice or information regarding the coronavirus, that you go to <https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19> or the school's website.

In response to guidance, and with the health and safety of the whole community in mind, the school has had to make or respond to a number of changes:

- The majority of school trips have been cancelled and we anticipate that trips scheduled in the next few months will also need to be cancelled or postponed. (We will update trip participants directly when details are confirmed.) We are pursuing claims with the trip/insurance companies where applicable, and will update parents/carers of the outcome of these claims when known.
- We are no longer running large scale events or on-site meetings that can be managed differently. As a result, the targeted parents evening (24<sup>th</sup> March) and Year 8 Options Evening (27<sup>th</sup> April) will not take place. With regret, I would alert families to the possibility that the Year 11 prom event may not be viable and urge them, therefore, not to commit to any unnecessary expenditure towards this event at this time.

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- Other than in exceptional circumstances, staff will liaise with parents/carers via telephone rather than by on site meeting. We would ask that parents/carers do not come onto the school site unless they have an appointment or have been asked to do so by staff.
- A number of services are no longer available to the school, including peripatetic Music lessons, EMAS (Ethnic Minority Achievement Service) provision and local area school crossing patrols. The Council has also advised us that they are reducing or adapting some of their service provision. Professional visitors to the school will be asked to confirm that they are following Government guidance relating to coronavirus.
- Governance decisions will continue to be made with Governors and Trustees working and liaising 'remotely' rather than through on-site meetings.
- We are continuing to ask all members of the school community to be vigilant to the symptoms of coronavirus – a high temperature, a new continuous cough – and to follow the Government's guidance to self-isolate. We will need parents/carers to collect promptly any pupil who develops symptoms during the school day and, consequently, needs to self-isolate.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public#what-to-do-if-you-have-symptoms>

At this time the school has not received any guidance from the examination Boards or Government regarding this year's GCSE examinations. For now, we advise that pupils continue to study, prepare and revise for their exams as usual. I hope that there will be some announcements or guidance produced over the coming weeks that will provide reassurance to pupils, their families and the school.

In these uncertain and unsettling times, it is important that we pull together as a community and focus on taking care of others and ourselves. We are aware that many of our children are understandably anxious about the situation and so are doing our best to reassure them and to empower them to take actions that can protect themselves and others. Please continue to emphasise the importance of good hygiene routines to them and ensure that they are sensitive to and respectful of the vulnerabilities of others.

I would politely ask that you check the school's website and newsfeed regularly to keep up to date with information from the school. If your contact information has changed or changes, please inform the school immediately. Please also continue to keep up to date with the Government's advice, which is being reviewed and updated continuously.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public>

Thank you for your understanding and continued support at this time.

Yours sincerely

Ms S F Spivey  
CEO, Headteacher