

Headteacher: Miss Caitlin Macrae

17<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

Re – Coronavirus Update 17<sup>th</sup> March 2020 10am

You have probably seen the news that the government has announced some new measures to deal with COVID-19 and also a change to its overall response. **The school remains open and is continuing to do all that it can to minimise the risk to students and staff and is following all the advice from the Department for Education, Public Health and Herts County Council.**

### Hygiene in school

We have introduced a number of measures to ensure good hygiene and reduce the risk to students and staff. The measures currently in place are:

- Students are regularly reminded of the need to wash their hands regularly, with information posters up in toilet facilities
- Hand sanitiser has been placed in key areas around the school
- Cleaning of touch points around the school (handles, rails, light switches etc) has been increased throughout the school day
- Classrooms and other areas have been rearranged to avoid any close group work
- Any activities where items are being shared and/or passed by hand from person to person around the classroom or area are being avoided
- Any shared equipment, for example computer keyboards and mice, are being cleaned before each use
- Break time and lunch time are strictly staggered to reduce the number of students in the dining room at one time, finger print payment has ceased, additional cleaning of tables between staggered sittings is in place and students are asked to go outside into the fresh air once they have eaten, weather permitting
- Assemblies have been cancelled, until further notice

### Self-isolation and staying at home

The government has now widened their advice on who should self-isolate and stay at home. Details can be found at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

With further details about the current advice and guidance at <https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/coronavirus-covid-19-uk-government-response>

Headteacher: Miss Caitlin Macrae

All our staff will be expected to follow this advice, and we ask you to ensure that your children do so too. If your children are absent from school because they are ill or are staying at home because someone in the household has symptoms, please continue to contact the school using the usual absence procedures.

In certain circumstances you may have taken the decision, or been advised by medical professionals, to keep your child at home even if they are not unwell. If this is the case please let us know and we will support your decision.

If your child is well, but staying at home, please encourage them to complete any tasks currently set on Show My Homework, Bedrock, Mathswatch or tasks on other learning platforms they have access to. They are also encouraged to read widely and revise any topics they have recently been learning about in school. If your child requires any work in addition to this, please contact your child's tutor in the first instance. We will do our best to provide additional work, but as I am sure you will understand, staff are currently under additional pressure covering for absent colleagues and planning work in preparation for any possible school closures.

### School Events and Trips

Please be advised that all school events taking place in the near future will be postponed or cancelled. This will include Year 7 Parents' and Carers' evening on the 2<sup>nd</sup> April.

There has been updated guidance on school trips and the government has advised that planned school trips outside the UK should not go ahead. We will of course follow this advice and we will write separately to the families of all students who were due to go on overseas trips in the remainder of the academic year.

We have also made the decision to cancel or postpone UK based trips, visits and fixtures in light of our risk assessments and staffing capacity within school. We will update all families affected as soon as possible, should arrangements change.

### The possibility of school closure

If we are ordered to close the school by Public Health England, because there is a risk to students and staff we will do so. If the government make a decision to close all schools we will do so, otherwise our intention is to stay open and operate as normal, for as long as possible.

We are however preparing in case the school closes. In the event of closure, staff will set work and learning activities for students to complete at home through Show My Homework. Students and staff will continue to communicate through the use of school email addresses. For those students who are not able to access the internet at home, printed copies of work will be available for them to take home.

Headteacher: Miss Caitlin Macrae

For those students due to take external exams in the summer term, we will continue to follow any advice and guidance from Ofqual and the exam boards and will keep you informed of any changes.

Please be aware that we may need to partially shut to some classes or year groups in the event of high levels of staff absence. We will communicate with you at the earliest opportunity when it becomes necessary to partially or completely close the school to students.

We will communicate any complete or partial closure of school through our usual school coms systems and the school website.

### Keeping informed

We will continue to provide updates as the situation continues to develop. All communications relevant to the Coronavirus Covid 19 situation can be found on the school website at

<https://www.highfield.herts.sch.uk/>

Finally, I would like to thank everyone in our Highfield community. This is a challenging and worrying time for many. Our students in school have been fantastically supportive of the new measures in place to minimise risk; their solidarity towards their fellow students and staff has been exemplary. Highfield staff are working tirelessly and with dedication to ensure our students are supported while they are still in school and in the event that the school is closed in the future.

Thanks also to all of you for your continued support of the school.

Yours faithfully,

Miss Caitlin Macrae  
**Headteacher**