

18 March 2020

Update from College, the School Management Team and Trustees

Dear Parents and Carers,

In the light of the ongoing and developing situation regarding Covid-19 (Coronavirus) the School is monitoring the situation regularly and taking a dynamic approach to this complex and changing picture. We are following the advice of the Welsh Government and Public Health Wales, in conjunction with the Welsh Independent School Council, to ensure the health of our whole community, including pupils and staff, and planning for the on-going education of pupils.

This afternoon the Welsh Government has announced the closure of all state schools in Wales from, at the latest, Friday 20 March 2020.

Kirsty Williams, the Welsh education has minister, has said:

“Today, I can announce we are bringing forward the Easter break for schools in Wales. Schools across Wales will close for statutory provision of education at the latest on 20 March 2020.”

Kirsty Williams has made clear that this decision has been focused on public health advice, including from the Chief Medical Officer and Public Health Wales. Julie Webster, the Independent School Manager for Welsh Government, has written to independent schools to inform us that they *“would encourage you to follow the advice given to maintained education settings... to put the wellbeing of all learners at the forefront of...decision making”*.

The wellbeing of our pupils and community and the continuity of our educational programme is of paramount importance to us, and for this reason we are taking the following steps:

In person teaching and learning will be suspended

In person learning and teaching will be suspended from this Friday at 6.00pm and we will resume through online learning next week. In line with Welsh Government advice this is initially until Easter break, but will be subject to ongoing review as the situation evolves. We will keep you updated on this.

Pupils will not attend onsite, but the School building will remain open and all staff will be onsite for the duration of the crisis, where possible, with our staff body continuing to work full time to deliver the education to your child/ren.

We are in process of implementing remote learning for all pupils (for Kindergartens approach please see [letter sent 17 March](#)). In the Classes we are looking particularly at how we continue to deliver and monitor a comprehensive programme of work for students with sufficient content to enable self-directed working. This will involve all Class and Subject teachers developing material, delivering learning and monitoring lessons remotely.

We are setting up an on-line platform that will support on-line learning and will shortly be sending out data consent forms to parents to request that we add your children to the platform.

At present our teachers are continuing to deliver a full timetable of lessons to pupils who are currently in School whilst also covering for staff who are absent. Please be patient with individual teachers as they work on this whilst still carrying a full teaching load. After Friday, prior to the launch of our on-line platform, teachers will:

- Maintain email communication with the pupils (via parents), providing them with work, marking as appropriate and providing feedback or answering queries.
- Respond to email queries on a daily basis (Mon to Fri) to support pupils in their learning.

Accessing online resources

The platform can be used on a PC, Mac or Laptop and also on on Android, Apple iPhone and iPad, or Chrome OS mobile devices. It is not available for Windows mobile devices. Please would you let the School know by email to parents@cardiffsteiner.org.uk if you may have a difficulty accessing an on-line education platform and we will consider measures to address this. We will offer clear advice on how the platform works when we launch.

School Events/Trips

It is with that same sentiment of safeguarding the health and safety of our community that, with a heavy heart, we have also had to postpone or cancel all School trips, visits and events. Please rest assured that this is only a temporary pause in our activities. Colleagues are working hard to ensure that despite the inevitable reduction in physical events - we provide new opportunities for us all to remain connected online

Keeping you safe and informed

Please follow national and local advice as detailed overleaf. Please would you, as parents and carers, keep us updated on any relevant developments in your family's health so that we can update our measures as necessitated by this. We have a number of children absent from School already who are either self-isolating as a precaution against the virus, or self-isolating as they are showing symptoms of the virus - that is a fever and / or a new continuous cough.

In the unprecedented times we live in, we are all understandably concerned and anxious about the developing situation in the UK and around the world. We will continue to give you information and advice as it made available to us, and will do everything we can to support you and to help you support the children. The community spirit that we hold so dear and believe in so strongly will continue to stand strong and unite us all through these trying times

Thank you for your support and all that you are doing to help each other at this difficult time. We extend our heartfelt best wishes to you all and your families. In the meantime, do stay safe.

With best wishes



Miranda Knight, Anna Podesta and Brigid Bowen
for College, the School Management Team and Trustees

[Advice reminder overleaf]

A reminder on Self Isolation

Advice today states that any family with a member showing a high temperature and / or a new continuous cough should stay at home for **14 days**.

This means stay at home for 14 days from the onset of symptoms if you have either:

- a high temperature – you feel hot to touch on your chest or back
- a new, continuous cough – this means you've started coughing repeatedly [this [video](#) is useful]

If you live with other people, they should stay at home for 14 days from the first day the first person got symptoms.

If you live with someone who is over 70, has a long term condition, is pregnant or has a weakened immune system, try to find somewhere else for them to stay for 14 days. If you have to stay home together, try to keep away from each other as much as possible.

Urgent advice: Use the [NHS direct Wales online symptom checker](#) if:

- you feel you cannot cope with your symptoms at home
- your condition gets worse
- your symptoms do not get better after 7 days

Do not go to a GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital.

You do not need to contact 111 to tell them you're staying at home.

Testing for coronavirus is not needed if you're staying at home.

Only call 111 if you cannot get help online.

A reminder on Social Distancing

As of 17 March 2020, the updated Government guidance is not yet saying that vulnerable people must remain at home but that it is recommended. We recognise that there is need for all members of the community to be particularly stringent in adhering to 'social distancing measures' where they meet one of the following criteria. A risk assessment is in place in School to address the above so far as the School is aware of individual conditions.

- aged 70 or older (regardless of medical conditions);
- under 70 with an underlying health condition listed below (ie. anyone instructed to get a flu jab as an adult each year on medical grounds);
- chronic (long-term) respiratory diseases, such as [asthma](#), [chronic obstructive pulmonary disease \(COPD\)](#), emphysema or [bronchitis](#);
- chronic heart disease, such as [heart failure](#);
- [chronic kidney disease](#);
- chronic liver disease, such as [hepatitis](#);
- chronic neurological conditions, such as [Parkinson's disease](#), [motor neurone disease](#), [multiple sclerosis \(MS\)](#), a learning disability or cerebral palsy;
- [diabetes](#);
- problems with your spleen – for example, [sickle cell](#) disease or if you have had your spleen removed;
- a weakened immune system as the result of conditions such as [HIV and AIDS](#), or medicines such as [steroid tablets](#) or [chemotherapy](#);
- being seriously overweight (a BMI of 40 or above);
- those who are pregnant.