



Whitburn Church of England Academy

An Academy with Specialist Status in Maths and Computing

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'Excellence for All'

13th March 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

Coronavirus Update

Given the changing situation with regards to Coronavirus (COVID-19), we thought it would be helpful to inform all parents and carers of actions we have taken in response to this.

Firstly I would like to reassure everyone that, at this current time, we are aware of **no** confirmed cases of this within our school community and we are operating as normal. As per the latest government guidance issued today, anyone **with a new continuous cough** or **high temperature** (37.8 degrees or higher) is now advised to **self-isolate for 7 days** <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/> as the UK moves from the 'containment' to the 'delay' phase of its plan to tackle this.

To supplement the Public Health England and DFE advice that has been posted on our academy website, we are continuing to remind staff and students about the importance of good hygiene. This includes reminders about the need to:

- use tissues to catch a cough or sneeze, then binning the tissue and washing hands afterwards
- wash hands frequently, particularly after using public transport, before leaving home, on arrival at school, after using the toilet, after breaks and sporting activities, before food preparation, before eating any food and before leaving school
- use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser if soap and water are not available
- avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- avoid close contact with people who are unwell

Updates are received from the DFE on a daily basis and routinely we follow all advice given. Just as we did with the recent winter vomiting bug, we have also significantly increased the frequency of cleaning of the school.

As the government is stepping up its response to the virus, we have reviewed our emergency closure plans should we be instructed to close, or partially close, in the future. Please be assured that we would only notify you via our official social media platforms in the event of this occurring. Information will be found at <https://www.whitburncofeacademy.org/news-events.html> or via our twitter account <https://twitter.com/WhitCofEAcad>.

PTO

Document available in large font, alternative language or audio format on request



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As a contingency measure, staff are presently preparing work for students to complete should we be instructed to close for any length of time. This work will be disseminated via a simple link on our school website. If the instruction to close does come, we will send out more information to you about how to access this work via the 'pupil' drop-down menu at the top of the website homepage. As access to this work will be IT dependent, we ask that any parents or carers who do **not** have internet access at home, inform us as soon as possible via the Main Academy Office.

We fully understand that students from Years 11 and 13 will be anxious with regards to their forthcoming examinations in the summer. Ofqual, who oversee all of the examinations in schools and colleges, are currently advising that students, schools and colleges should continue to prepare for the summer exams and assessments as usual. We will of course keep you updated if anything else changes with regard to this situation.

As you will be also aware that yesterday the Prime Minister issued new guidance relating to travel for children under the age of 18 organised by educational settings. The government advises against all overseas education trips for children under 18 years old. Domestic trips are not as yet affected. We have two overseas trips planned for the Easter holidays and we are waiting for further advice from both of the tour operators and the Academy's own Insurer. As you can understand, this is an unprecedented situation and is constantly changing on a daily basis. Please can I ask for your patience in this matter, as I await a response from the Department for Education and the Academy's own insurance company? We will contact all parents and carers as soon as information is made available to us.

In the interim we will continue to operate as normal. I would like to take this opportunity to thank parents and carers for supporting us in reinforcing the key messages about good hygiene. I hope that this also gives some reassurance that, despite the very difficult circumstances for everyone, we are working hard to maintain high standards of hygiene and to ensure continuity of your child's education if the current situation changes.

Thank you for your continued support, we will continue to keep you updated when further information is available.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J E Crowe', written in a cursive style.

J E Crowe
Principal