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*Headteacher Lynn Harrison*

Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Dear Parents

Please find below the government advice regarding the Coronavirus outbreak, which was provided yesterday:

### **Coronavirus (COVID-19) - Advice to schools**

We understand that the current situation is causing concern amongst schools trying to determine how best to respond in the absence of a clear direction from Government. This is leading to schools taking varying approaches, often in the same communities. This is understandable but also risks creating confusion amongst families.

While we await further Government direction please can all schools follow the advice set out below which has been agreed with Cumbria's Director of Public Health Colin Cox.

- Schools should remain open unless advised otherwise by Public Health England.
- Take steps to reduce contact with people outside of the school. For example, only essential visitors, stop non-essential out of hours meeting/gatherings, postpone school trips.
- In school, stop large gatherings unless educationally essential. Note that in small schools this is less relevant because the whole school population is likely to be in regular close contact throughout the school day.
- It should be expected that some pupils and families will have to self-isolate. The school should remain open unless advised otherwise by Public Health England. (It is not necessarily the case that people will be tested for COVID-19, meaning it may not be known for certain that the infection is present.
- If staff absence means that staffing ratios become too low to operate safely, schools should close.
- For Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) where staffing ratios are lower than in mainstream schools, and where pupils are particularly vulnerable, early intelligence about the changing situation should be communicated urgently via the e-mail address below.
- Where pupils have specific vulnerabilities that put them at higher risk, particularly in Special Schools, individual risk assessments should be carried out. It may be appropriate for parents/carers to remove their child from school and self-isolate. Some parents/carers may already have done so and should be supported, Special School Head Teachers should make this recommendation to parents where risk assessments indicate this is necessary. Email [education.tcg@cumbria.gov.uk](mailto:education.tcg@cumbria.gov.uk) for specific tailored advice on individual cases.

The guidance was updated yesterday evening (16<sup>th</sup> March) and, whilst the majority of advice remains the same as before, it now includes the following:

"Anyone who is living with family members who are exhibiting symptoms (a new, continuous cough and/or high temperature above 37.8C) should now self-isolate for 14 days."

This will mean that those most likely to become infected are isolated during the incubation period of the disease.

Advice to parents about pupils attending school on this basis has been updated on our website.

If you are unsure if your child should attend school please contact us either by email or by telephone from 8am each day.

We have an isolation absence code for the register now, so please do be honest with us about the reason for your child/ren's absence when contacting the school.

Yours sincerely

*Lynn Harrison*