



PARTNERSHIP OF DRONFIELD SCHOOLS (PODS)

Barlow C of E Primary School, Dronfield Henry Fanshawe School (DHFS), Dronfield Infant School, Dronfield Junior School, Gorseybrigg Primary School and Nursery, Holmesdale Infant School, Lenthall Infant and Nursery School, Northfield Junior School, Penny Acres Primary School, St. Andrew's C of E Methodist Primary School, Stonelaw Junior School, Unstone St. Mary's Nursery and Infant School, Unstone Junior School, Wigley Primary School, William Levick Primary School

15th March 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

Partnership of Dronfield Schools (PODS) Information – Coronavirus

Following our initial letter of 27th February, we wish to write as the Partnership of Dronfield Schools (PODS) to update you on the latest with the coronavirus, to respond to frequently asked questions and to provide useful links to additional information.

PODS are in daily contact with each other and are working collaboratively to support our community through the current public health issue of the Covid-19 strain of coronavirus. As a cluster of schools we are following the daily information, advice and guidance that is published by the Government, the Department for Education (DfE), Public Health England (PHE) and Derbyshire County Council (DCC).

All the schools within PODS are working together to ensure that best practice is in place and that all steps are being taken to manage the situation and maintain positive health and wellbeing, as well as to continue to function as schools and provide the highest quality education for your children.

Given below are responses to some frequently asked questions that the schools receive, as well as links to very useful resources and websites that can provide further information. It is important to note that the situation is ever-changing and this change can be swift. As schools we will ensure you are swiftly updated as appropriate.

The main points to note at this stage are:

- Schools will remain open
- Students and staff who have a temperature of 37.8 degrees or higher and/or a new, continuous cough should be absent from school and self-isolate for 7 days
- Siblings and family members do not have to self-isolate unless they have the specific symptoms given above

- Other illnesses should be treated as normal and students should maintain excellent attendance unless they are too poorly to be in school
- Schools will continue to promote the highest standards of personal hygiene of individuals and cleaning regimes each day
- With the exception of overseas trips, which are not taking place, and an enhanced focus on hygiene and cleaning, schools will operate as normal on a day-to-day basis

In the meantime, please follow the advice and guidance that comes from official sources and ensure that you respond to communication directly from the school through their usual means, and avoid the misinformation and disinformation that can be spread via alternative sources.

What is the coronavirus?

Covid-19 is a new illness that can affect your lungs and airways. It's caused by a virus called coronavirus. The NHS has an overview of the illness that can be found at:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

What are the symptoms?

The symptoms of coronavirus are:

- a cough
- a high temperature (37.8 degrees or higher)
- shortness of breath

But these symptoms do not necessarily mean you have the illness.

What is the Government's strategy?

So far government strategy has been to try and limit the number of infections; this was called the **Contain Stage**. This advice has now changed to the **Delay Stage**. During this, the focus is to slow down rates of infection as it moves into the general population.

Where can I get up-to-date national and local information from?

There are a number of sources that are proving very effective at providing the latest information. A selection of these are given below:

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-action-plan>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/travel-advice-novel-coronavirus>

<https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/social-health/health-and-wellbeing/health-protection/disease-control/coronavirus/coronavirus-covid-19.aspx>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news>

<https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/nhs-services/urgent-and-emergency-care/nhs-111/>

What are school's doing about it?

At this current time, schools are open and operating as usual, and students who are well are expected to attend every day. In order to reduce the spread of any infection, students are also being given guidance by staff about good hygiene, which includes:

- Use of tissues to catch a cough or sneeze, then binning the tissue and washing hands
- Washing 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. A short NHS film about handwashing can be found at:
<https://youtu.be/bQCP7waTRWU>
- In addition, for younger children there is a hand-washing song that can be found at
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S9VjeIWLnEg>
- Use of an alcohol-based hand sanitiser as available
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- Avoid close contact with people who are unwell
- The schools have also increased the cleaning of schools by ensuring that high traffic areas and touch surfaces are cleaned during the day more frequently.
- We are making provision for additional hand sanitiser to be available and to ensure our hand washing areas remain well stocked. If you are aware that your child has any allergies relating to an alcohol-based sanitiser, please ensure that you contact the school and let us know immediately
- We talk to the children about how to wash their hands effectively and to remind them to maintain good hygiene at all times.

Should I keep my child off school?

The advice from Public Health England is that unless a child is unwell or has been advised to self-isolate they should go to school. If this changes, new guidance will be issued by Public Health England, the Department for Health and Social Care or the NHS and we'll give you regular updates.

Government advice is people with a temperature of 37.8C or above and/or a persistent cough should self-isolate for 7 days. This means any students with those symptoms should not attend school for a full week.

We appreciate some parents and children may be worried about themselves, members of their family or their friends becoming ill. The BBC's Newsround has published a useful video for children which can be found at:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/51342366>

Schools and nurseries are advised to remain open. No school or nursery should close in response to a suspected or confirmed case of coronavirus unless directed to do so by Public Health England.

What happens of my child is due on a school trip?

Trips in the UK are currently going ahead but do not send your child if they are unwell. Risk assessments and the latest advice are always followed as the trip date approaches.

All overseas school trips are banned until further notice – schools will have trips planned in the calendar and a decision on these will be taken closer to the individual trip dates based on the latest advice and risk assessments

Will the schools close?

Current advice from Public Health England, the Local Authority and the Government is that schools remain open and we continue to expect excellent attendance unless you hear, to the contrary by the school or a national body.

Schools are preparing for potential closures and what this means regarding access to learning, services and provision. Individual schools will manage and communicate procedures directly in the event of any closure

Yours sincerely

Partnership of Dronfield Schools