



13 March 2020



North Cotswold Headteachers

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are writing to provide information about the outbreak and spread of coronavirus (COVID-19), and how this may affect the primary schools in the North Cotswold Partnership.

Reports in yesterday's media suggested that all schools in the UK will be closed for up to two months, in what has been described as a 'delay phase'. At the time of writing, schools have not received any such guidance from the Department for Education. Similarly, some reports claimed that all schools have been asked to produce 'home-learning packs' for all pupils by today. This is also untrue: at the time of writing, the Department for Education has not issued any such instruction.

Schools have been advised to remind children to wash their hands thoroughly for 20 seconds and to try to avoid touching their faces. Staff in schools have spoken to the children about this and antibacterial handwash is available for pupils as always. In addition, Glen Cleaning, have instructed our school's cleaning team to focus on cleaning toilet areas and hand touch points: desks, door handles, door touch plates, bannisters, hand rails, taps, switches to prevent the spread. At the time of writing, schools have been advised that they are not to close, even in the event of a suspected (or confirmed) coronavirus case unless directed to do so by Public Health England (PHE). This is the guidance we shall follow.

Staff, parents and carers need to remain vigilant at this time. In particular, PHE have advised that symptoms of COVID-19 include cough, fever, shortness of breath, or flu-like symptoms. It is important to note that most people showing these symptoms are unlikely to have the virus: as of 12th March, 29,764 people have been tested in the UK for the virus, of which 29,174 were confirmed negative. The evidence is that most cases appear to be mild, although people with underlying health conditions may experience a more severe reaction.

PHE state that the virus can only be caught if a person has been in close contact with another person who already has the virus. The chances of this happening, according to PHE, are currently low in the UK.



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To limit the spread of the virus, the DfE yesterday updated their advice to schools by advising that anyone (pupil or staff member) with a new, continuous cough or high temperature (37.8°C or higher) should stay at home for seven days.

If schools are advised to close for a prolonged period of time, teachers will assign work on their school's website and through other educational websites to ensure that pupils are provided with work to complete. We shall continue to communicate with parents via email and the school's text message service, and staff will be instructed to work from home. In the meantime, we will continue to follow government and departmental advice and remind children to keep washing their hands thoroughly.

We remain hopeful that the school will be able to stay open and the spread of the virus is contained.

Yours sincerely,

North Cotswold Headteachers

North Cotswold Primary Schools: Andoversford Primary School, Bledington Primary School, Blockley C of E Primary School, Bourton-on-the-Water Primary School, Cold Aston C of E Primary School, Longborough C of E Primary School, Mickleton Primary School, Northleach C of E Primary School, The Rissington School, Sherborne C of E Primary School, St. Andrew's C of E Primary School, St. Catharine's Catholic Primary School, St. David's C of E Primary School, St. James and Ebrington C of E Primary School, Stow-on-the-Wold Primary School, Swell C of E Primary School, Temple Guiting C of E Primary School, Willersey C of E Primary School, Withington C of E Primary School.

