



Bishop Vaughan Catholic School

Monday 16th March 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

At Bishop Vaughan, the health and safety of the pupils we serve - and indeed of their families, the staff and all in our school community – are of paramount importance.

Parents and carers are naturally preoccupied and worried about the situation regarding the COVID-19 illness caused by the new coronavirus and the implications for their children and their families. I would like to reassure you that we are monitoring the situation closely, implementing all available Government and Public Health Wales advice. We are working hard to reduce risks to our school community and are in constant communication with the Local Authority to ensure that our actions reflect the most up-to-date advice available from them and from the Public Health Wales body.

In formulating our school approach to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 we have also used a range of written sources of information including information from:

- The Government website and its guidance on the national response to COVID-19: <https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/coronavirus-covid-19-uk-government-response> and <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19>
- The COVID-19 update from the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL)

Current school status: school is open

In line with advice from the UK Government, the Welsh Government and the Local Education Authority school remains open. However, we have formulated a detailed plan should we receive guidance that schools are to close in order to provide continuity for learning. School staff have already been working to ensure a variety of teaching resources will be accessible to pupils in the event of a closure. If we are advised to close we will contact you immediately with details of these plans.

What we are doing as a school:

- Liaising with the Local Authority to plan and prioritise the health and wellbeing of all members of our school community
- Formulating a COVID-19 mitigation of risk plan for our school community and updating our risk assessments
- Increasing staff understanding of the symptoms of COVID-19 and providing clear guidance for pupils and staff should they feel unwell
- Amending the curriculum and lessons plans to include lessons and discussion on hand hygiene for our youngest learners

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- Placing additional posters in classrooms and toilet facilities to highlight strategies which limits the spread of the virus
- Working with suppliers to procure additional supplies of soap and hand sanitiser for school and inspecting toilet facilities and classrooms throughout the day
- Providing a 'Helping to Keep You Safe' planner page for all pupils which focuses on hand hygiene and other strategies to limit the spread of the virus
- Staggering the timing of breaktimes and lunchtimes for certain year groups to reduce pressure on the toilet facilities and promote hand washing before the consumption of food
- Stopping self-service options from catering provision to eliminate risk from salad utensils which are handled by multiple users
- Providing Personal Identification Numbers for pupils to purchase food rather than the use of thumb prints on the shared-use biometric system
- Reviewing those members of our staff and pupil community who have reduced immunity in order to put in place addition measures to mitigate risk to them
- Providing you with daily updates on the school's position starting from Monday 16th March 2020
- Providing clear guidance to staff and pupils on what to do if symptoms of COVID-19 present themselves
- Increasing the physical space available to those pupils that are unwell and waiting for collection from school
- Cancelling all face-to-face non-urgent meetings and offering telephone conversations wherever possible
- Temporarily postponing all school trips: further details are available from teachers leading the trip. This is a difficult but necessary decision and will remain under review as the situation progresses. Advice regarding refunds will be available in due course
- Temporarily cancelling all sporting fixtures
- Liaising with our bus companies to ensure a continued service while the school remains open
- Asking visitors on site to sanitise their hands upon arrival
- Preparing work for home learning for pupils in the event of a closure

We would ask that you

Take the time to explore the following guidance issued by the NHS to avoid the spread of COVID-19 encouraging children to:

- ✓ Wash hands with soap and water often – for 20 seconds
- ✓ Cover nose and mouth with a tissue or sleeve when they cough or sneeze
- ✓ Put used tissues in the bin immediately and wash their hands afterwards
- ✓ Try to avoid close contact with people who are unwell

DO NOT touch eyes, nose or mouth if hands are not clean.

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

- Reinforce at home the importance of regular hand washing:
 - ✓ before leaving home
 - ✓ on arrival at school
 - ✓ after using the toilet
 - ✓ after breaks and sporting activities
 - ✓ before food preparation
 - ✓ before eating any food
 - ✓ before leaving school
- Update school if any of your contact details have changed – this is especially important if we need to close during the school day
- Keep an eye on our school website and Twitter feed

In the event of illness

- Staff, pupils and visitors should stay at home if they are unwell with a **new, continuous cough or a high temperature to avoid spreading infection to others**
- If staff or pupils become unwell on site with these symptoms they will be **sent home**
- Parents and carers should follow the staying-at home-guidance published by the Government:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-people-with-confirmed-or-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

At present, this advises self-isolating for seven days. NHS 111 will give guidance on accessing treatment should your symptoms worsen during this time. Please be assured that any absences related to self-isolation or to suspected/ confirmed cases of COVID-19 will be fully authorised. At present, I can reassure you that there are no confirmed cases of this within the school.

If there is a school closure

I will communicate this information to you and provide detail of measures that school will take to ensure learning material is provided for pupils at home. In the event of a school closure the points of contact with you will be through the school website and our Twitter feed. This will allow school staff to update it remotely during a closure and whilst not on the school site.

Concerns about formal examinations

School is currently awaiting advice and guidance from Welsh Government, Qualifications Wales and the WJEC examination body to clarify the position for schools.

Keeping in touch with you

I will update you with further information as and when it becomes available. The situation is fluid and changing so I would also ask that you check the school website and Twitter feed frequently in order to ensure that you are fully up-to-date.

Finally, I am always grateful to those in the Bishop Vaughan community for their understanding and support. This is a time of unprecedented challenge and you can be assured that we will work closely with you to ensure the health and wellbeing of our community. If you should wish to discuss the details of this letter further, please do not hesitate to contact the school.

With best wishes to you and your family, and with thanks for your continued support in these challenging circumstances.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mrs Pole', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mrs Pole
Headteacher