

Briefing Note 1: 13<sup>th</sup> March 2020

**Parent Update: COVID-19**

Dear Parents/Carers

Please find below an update regarding the action St Nicholas Owen Catholic Multi Academy Company is taking in response to the latest government guidance regarding the Coronavirus. We are very grateful for the ongoing support of members of our community during this time of uncertainty.

**WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW**

As you will be aware from the government's announcement yesterday regarding the spread of Coronavirus in the UK, all advice at present is that schools and colleges will remain open and staff and pupils/students should go about their daily activities.

Just like the government however, we continue to review our practices and will introduce additional measures where we believe it necessary or in order to support the wellbeing of our staff, pupils/students or wider community.

With that in mind, we have made some changes with immediate effect, as follows:

- All our school staff are regularly reminding pupils/students about the importance of good hygiene and frequent hand washing.
- We have adopted a no handshake policy throughout the company. In addition, all staff and visitors to our schools and Central Offices are required to wash their hands, on arrival.
- Our schools have also been asked to increase the level of daily disinfection cleaning including metal door plates, doors, handles and handrails.
- Large gatherings involving the general public will be postponed, where possible or cancelled. We will review the situation again after the Easter break. Principals will inform parents separately of the events affected in their individual schools.

- International activity: As per government advice, any future staff or pupil/student trips outside of the UK will most likely be cancelled or rearranged.
- Student trips and non-essential activity: All sporting fixtures, swimming and school trips will be cancelled or postponed until after Easter when we will review the situation again. Where a trip is essential, as part of an examination, such as field work, the Principal will need to discuss and approve this with the Catholic Senior Executive Leader in liaison with the relevant examination board and ongoing government guidance.
- Work experience placements: Whilst most work placements are going ahead as planned currently, we are aware that employers may review this situation as the weeks unfold. We will also continue to review this. We have already made the decision to cancel work placements linked to care and health settings as we are aware of the heightened risk to which we would be exposing vulnerable and elderly people by conducting these placements.
- Vulnerable staff or students: We are aware that some staff or pupils/students may have a heightened risk of infection due to an existing medical condition. We are advising them to obtain and act upon medical advice in relation to this, which of course St Nicholas Owen Multi Academy Company will support them with. If this applies to your child(ren), please speak to the Principal of your child's school.
- Ongoing support: We must always remember that that this is a critical time for many of our learners as they come towards the end of their courses and are preparing for KS2 tests, KS4 and 5 examinations and final assignments. Helping all our students to continue with their studies throughout any potential disruption will of course be a priority for us all. Whilst we hope this will not happen, we are ensuring that we are ready to continue supporting learners should any school be forced to close in the future, or should staff be unable to attend school.
- Communications: We will continue to provide updates via these briefing notes which will be distributed to parents/carers by the Principal at each school. A copy will also be placed on the St Nicholas Owen Catholic Multi Academy Company website: [stnicholasowen-mac.org.uk](http://stnicholasowen-mac.org.uk). Principals will also continue to update with local information relevant to their individual schools and will display advice from the local authority on their individual school websites.

## **WHAT YOU NEED TO DO**

- In addition to the information above, please continue to familiarise yourself with the ongoing government guidance as to how best you can best protect yourself and your family. We understand that this is a very uncertain time but please be assured that we will be doing everything possible to keep you informed of this changing situation. We need everyone to exercise their own reasonable judgment and remember this situation may persist for some time, so we are embarking on a marathon not a sprint in terms of our collective response.

- Government Guidance as of today can be accessed on the link below and has also been summarised in the following section:

<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>

- **Symptoms**

The most common symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are recent onset of:

- new continuous cough and/or
- high temperature

For most people, coronavirus (COVID-19) will be a mild infection

**Key messages from the government:**

- if you have symptoms of coronavirus infection (COVID-19), however mild, stay at home and do not leave your house for 7 days from when your symptoms started.
- this action will help protect others in your community whilst you are infectious
- plan ahead and ask others for help to ensure that you can successfully stay at home
- ask your employer, friends and family to help you to get the things you need to stay at home
- stay at least 2 metres (about 3 steps) away from other people in your home whenever possible
- sleep alone, if that is possible
- wash your hands regularly for 20 seconds, each time using soap and water
- stay away from vulnerable individuals such as the elderly and those with underlying health conditions as much as possible
- you do not need to call NHS111 to go into self-isolation. If your symptoms worsen during home isolation or are no better after 7 days contact [NHS 111 online](#). If you have no internet access, you should call NHS 111. For a medical emergency dial 999

Finally, thank you, once again, for your continued support and generosity of spirit as we continue to pray for the ongoing health, recuperation and safety of our own community and the wider world.

*Suzanne Horan*

Catholic Senior Executive Leader