3rd March 2020

Re: Coronavirus

Dear Families,

Acting on the latest information re novel coronavirus from the Department of Health, the Department of Education is assisting schools in providing advice for students, staff and families regarding:

- Information about the novel coronavirus, COVID-19,
- how to help prevent spread of all respiratory infections including COVID-19,
- what advice to give to individuals who have travelled from specified countries or areas within the last 14 days, including school trips

Information about the virus

A coronavirus is a type of virus. As a group, coronaviruses are common across the world. COVID-19 is a new strain of coronavirus first identified in Wuhan City, China in January 2020.

The incubation period of COVID-19 is between 2 and 14 days. This means that if a person remains well 14 days after contact with someone with confirmed coronavirus, it is unlikely that they have been infected.

The following symptoms may develop in the 14 days after exposure to someone who has COVID-19 infection:

- cough
- difficulty in breathing
- fever

Generally, these infections can cause more severe symptoms in people with weakened immune systems, older people, and those with long-term conditions like diabetes, cancer and chronic lung disease. There is no evidence that children are more affected than other age groups – very few cases have been reported in children.

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from possibility to reality
Preventing spread of infection

There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to the virus.

There are general principles anyone can follow to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses, including:

- washing your hands often - with soap and water, or use alcohol sanitiser if handwashing facilities are not available. This is particularly important after taking public transport
- covering your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throwing the tissue in a bin. See Catch it, Bin it, Kill it
- people who show symptoms as described above should stay at home and not attend the academy
- students, staff and visitors should wash their hands:
  - before leaving home
  - on arrival at school
  - after using the toilet
  - after breaks and sporting activities
  - before food preparation
  - before eating any food, including snacks
  - before leaving school
- use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available
- avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- avoid close contact with people who are unwell
- clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces
- if you are worried about your symptoms or those of a child or colleague, please call NHS 111. Do not go directly to your GP or other healthcare environment

People who have returned from:

Wuhan city and Hubei Province (China)
Iran
Daegu or Cheongdo (Republic of Korea)
Any northern Italian town under containment measures

in the last 14 days should self-isolate. This includes avoiding attending the academy until 14 days after they return.
People who have returned from:

Cambodia
Hong Kong
Japan
Laos
Macau
Malaysia
Myanmar
Singapore
Taiwan
Thailand
Vietnam

in the last 14 days, are advised to stay at home if they develop symptoms. All other students and staff should continue to attend the academy.

School trips

Currently, we have not been instructed to cancel immediate or longer term trip commitments. We are aware that this situation is fluid and will keep you informed on updated advice from the Department for Education.

Should you have any specific questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Anthony Hamilton
Headmaster