



THE HELENA ROMANES SCHOOL & SIXTH FORM CENTRE

Dear Parents/Carers,

Coronavirus update, 17 March 2020

Further to my communication yesterday, please find attached the following updates.

New government guidance

As you will no doubt be aware, the government updated their advice on self-isolation yesterday afternoon:

- Anyone with a fever or persistent cough should stay at home for seven days if they live alone or 14 days if they live with others
- Anyone who lives with someone displaying coronavirus symptoms should also stay at home for 14 days
- The government has also begun to introduce guidance regarding lengthier self-isolation periods for people who fall into 'at-risk' categories, for example pregnant women.

Please ensure that you follow these instructions. Students should not return to school until the end of the 14 day period.

Implications for our school

As I am sure that you can imagine, the initial government guidance regarding self-isolation caused difficulties for schools across Essex in terms of increased staff absence.

The significant shift in government advice issued yesterday has made things even more challenging. Self-isolation periods have now doubled, the range of people who need to self-isolate has significantly increased, while 'at risk' people will now be included in the guidance. We can only assume that the number of people self-isolating will continue to increase.

I informed you yesterday that, although we will endeavour to keep the school open, there is a possibility of a partial closure if we are unable to maintain safe staffing levels. This risk remains, and it has increased following yesterday's announcements.

At present the school remains fully open, but we need to monitor this on a daily basis. Although decisions on any partial closure will be made at short notice, we will aim to inform you on the day before if we have to implement these measures. If the school does have to partially close, we will prioritise the education of Year 11 and 13 students, ahead of their upcoming examinations.

Work for self-isolating students

If your son/daughter is self-isolating, we are currently producing a series of links to educational resources that students can access from home. We will endeavour to provide this as soon as we can. However, we would ask for your patience and support in this matter. As you will appreciate, we are trying to maintain a fully open school, with reduced levels of staffing, at the same time as developing this additional guidance.

Thank you for your continued support during this difficult time.

Yours sincerely,

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