



## THE HELENA ROMANES SCHOOL & SIXTH FORM CENTRE

Dear Parents/Carers,

### Coronavirus update, 18 March 2020

Please find today's updates below.

#### Update on potential school closure

The school remains open. However, as mentioned yesterday, the threat of partial or full school closure has increased significantly as a result of the changes made by the government to their self-isolation guidance earlier this week.

- The latest government guidance is outlined below
- Our ***Coronavirus: partial and full school closure procedures*** are appended to this update.

#### Latest Government guidance

- If you live alone and you have symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19), however mild, stay at home for 7 days from when your symptoms started
- If you live with others and you or another member of the household have symptoms of coronavirus, then all household members must stay at home and not leave the house for 14 days
- The 14-day period starts from the day when the first person in the house became ill. It is likely that people living within a household will infect each other or be infected already. Staying at home for 14 days will greatly reduce the overall amount of infection the household could pass on to others in the community
- For anyone in the household who starts displaying symptoms, they need to stay at home for 7 days from when the symptoms appeared, regardless of what day they are on in the original 14-day isolation period.
- The symptoms are:
  - A high temperature (37.8 degrees and above)
  - A new, continuous cough

**Please ensure that you follow these instructions. Students should not return to school until the end of the full isolation period.**

#### 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.

#### Letter from Clare Kershaw, Director of Education, Essex County Council

I have attached a letter from Clare Kershaw to this email. I have also pasted the opening paragraphs below, for your ease of reference.

Parsonage Downs, Great Dunmow, Essex CM6 2AU

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**Headteacher: Daniel Gee BA(Hons), MA, NPQH**

*Across Essex, Head Teachers are working extremely hard to continue to keep schools open in these unprecedented times. You will be aware that the government has now moved from the containment phase to the delay phase with regards to the virus and has released new advice around self-isolation and vulnerable groups of people.*

*The impact for schools of this new advice means that many staff are affected by the self-isolation policy, in the same way that families are also impacted. This means that Head Teachers are dealing with higher than usual levels of staff absence at the current time, as per the new guidance.*

*We want to reassure you that Head Teachers' key priorities are the safety, welfare and wellbeing of your children and young people and their first job is to ensure that schools continue to be safe places for your children and young people, whilst they remain open. Therefore, with a significant number of staff absent, it may become impossible to continue to run schools as normal. For this reason, it may become necessary to partially or fully close schools, even if the government has not made a decision to close all schools. Schools will do everything to avoid a full closure, however if staff levels are too low to ensure children are safe, schools will be left with no choice but to consider this option.*

Once again, thank you for your continued support during this difficult time.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Daniel Gee". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'D'.

Daniel Gee  
Headteacher

## **Coronavirus: partial and full school closure procedures**

Should we be unable to safely provide an education for your children at school we will consider the implementation of one or more of the following options:

### **Option A – Combination of teaching groups**

Combine teaching groups where safe and appropriate. This may mean one or more groups undertake one or more lessons/supervised study sessions in the dining area or the school hall.

### **Option B – Combinations of Year 7, 8 and 9 remain at home**

Where groups cannot be combined, individual or a combination of year groups will be asked to remain at home. For example just Year 7, both Year 8 and 9, or all three year groups may be requested to remain at home. This process may be undertaken on a rota if possible.

### **Option C - Additional Year groups remain at home**

If necessary, we will also request that Year 10 and 12 remain at home. We would endeavour to maintain appropriate provision for Year 11 and 13.

### **Option D – Total school closure**

Total school closure will only take place if we are directed to, or we do not have the capacity to continue to educate your children safely.

- We will review the situation on a daily basis and communicate with parents/carers, if necessary
- We will endeavour to give parents/carers a minimum of 24 hours' notice if we ask one or more year groups to remain at home
- During a partial school closure, students will be directed to learning tasks via our website
- During a total school closure, teachers will set specific work for students on a daily basis (in line with their normal school timetable) from the second day of closure. Students will be directed to learning tasks via our website on day 1.