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Dear Parents and Carers

Tallis and Coronavirus

This letter is about what we are doing in school, but starts with the latest advice from *Public Health England* and the *Department for Education*

1. Why might my child need to miss school?

- If your child has symptoms of coronavirus infection (COVID-19), however mild, they should not leave home for 7 days from when symptoms start.
- They should stay at least 2 metres (about 3 steps) away from other people in your home whenever possible.
- They must wash hands regularly and frequently for 20 seconds, each time using soap and water.
- They should 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 for your child to go into self-isolation. If symptoms get worse during home isolation or are no better after 7 days, you should contact NHS 111 online: <https://111.nhs.uk/>. If you have no internet access, you should call NHS 111. For a medical emergency dial 999.
- You should notify the school on the first day of your child's absence, in the normal way, giving your child's name and tutor group and saying that they are self-isolating for seven days. You will need to report your child's absence and reason for absence **every day that they are away from school** for safeguarding reasons. Absences due to self-isolation due to symptoms of COVID-19 will be authorised.

2. When could they come back?

- a. Children should stay at home until 7 days after symptoms start. After 7 days, if they feel better and no longer have a high temperature, they may return to their normal routine.
- b. All the advice is here <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>

3. Preventing infection in schools

- a. There is no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to the virus. So, it is vital that students, staff and visitors frequently wash their hands according to guidance.

4. Will schools close?

- a. No school should close in response to a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 unless they are directed by Public Health England.

5. Will overseas trips carry on?

- a. The government advises against all overseas education trips for children under 18. This is because trip leaders would face significant challenges in making arrangements to ensure children's welfare if adult supervisors or children be required to self-isolate.

6. What about domestic trips?

- a. The Department for Education is not currently advising against residential and non-residential domestic trips for children under 18. However, education settings should refresh their risk assessments to take into account the latest health advice.

7. What about the exams?

- a. Ofqual's advice at this time is to continue to prepare for exams and other assessments as normal. [Ofqual is the Office for Qualifications]
- b. Ofqual works closely with exam boards, other regulators and the Department for Education to plan for a range of scenarios, as the public would expect. Their overriding priorities are fairness to students this summer and keeping disruption to a minimum.
- c. It is still many weeks until exams start and there will be updated advice if necessary, giving schools and colleges as much notice as possible.

Tallis Decisions

We will cancel events that we think we can do without, making decisions as they approach. Therefore we have ***cancelled year 8 options evening on Wednesday 18 March 2020***. Obviously, options still need to be taken, but the children have already had a range of information assemblies and we will post all the decision-making information to you. Mr Brunoir is the first point of contact for this.

We were about to hold a ***GCSE revision advice session for parents*** as we do every year. However, we'll put all that information on the year 11 website.

If schools are instructed to close, we will make sure that there is ***enough subject information and tasks available online*** so that children can keep up with their studies. We are asking them for information about their level of digital connectivity, tomorrow. We are working hard on that, and other issues raised by possible closure. However, closure doesn't look very likely at the moment.

Things we are telling children

They must wash their hands, thoroughly and regularly. We are keeping soap supplies topped up – but someone stole some of them this morning. We are investigating this and will take very strong action against anyone who endangers the health of our community this way.

If any child feels unwell, they are being directed to reception where they will have their temperature taken with a contactless device. If it is raised, we'll contact you. If not, not. If we have any concerns about a child's health, we will contact you.

We do not allow facemasks. Public Health England say 'there is no evidence of benefit from their use outside healthcare environments'.

We are advising children not to touch one another if they can help it. A lot of our young people are very tactile – hugging, playing with each other's hair, and suchlike. They should try to stop doing this while the virus threat is with us!

I did a Q&A in year 9 assembly this morning and will try to do that with all year groups this week. They asked sensible questions.

If you are concerned about any of this, please contact us. As ever, it is your child's tutor or Head of Year who is the best first contact.

I hope that you feel we are being sensible. I will keep you updated when and if matters change. Please keep looking at the website.

Thank you as ever for your support.

Yours sincerely

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

Carolyn Roberts
Head