

Dear Parents/Carers

Coronavirus Information – Frequently Asked Questions

In the newsletter last week we advised that all necessary and current measures are being taken place in school to aid the prevention of the Coronavirus.

I can appreciate that whilst we are saying one thing, the media are continuously speculating and this can be confusing, therefore, I thought I would write to clear up some concerns and offer some advice by answering a few of the questions that we have been receiving.

1 Is the school closing?

No.

It may be that at some point in the future the government decides to close schools but we don't know when this might happen or whether there will be a country-wide closure or a more local response. Schools receive daily updates and this is because decisions are being made on a day-by-day basis at government level. What is highly unlikely is that we will be told e.g. "schools will close in two weeks' time." More likely, we will receive instructions on one day to say closures will be from the next working day. Schools will close based on government advice and we will not take local decisions.

2 How will we know if the school will close?

If there is a national closure it is possible that the first you (and we) will hear about it is that there will be an announcement by the government on TV, radio, etc. Following this, we will contact each of our parents via email to let them know what is happening. Information will also be posted on the school website. The school will not close part way through a day. So, if there is an announcement at e.g. 11am by the prime minister, you will be told that Ernehale Junior School will be closed 'from tomorrow' or 'from Monday' and we will share with you the anticipated length of closure.

If schools close...

3 What will happen to my child's education?

Whilst we are being told that it is 'business as usual' we have looked at what is happening in other countries and, behind the scenes, we are preparing for 'just in case'. Teachers this week are preparing work packs that can be sent home and we are also planning for teachers to be available online for periods of the day to be accessible to parents and children to provide learning support. We are still working on the fine details but the plan is that there will be set times during the day where children and or parents can contact their teacher or TA directly from home. It won't be for the whole day as, just like you, many staff will have their own children off school and they will need to meet their own families' needs.

4 What will happen with SATs?

All of the information we have received so far is that they will go ahead as normal. We need to remember that any decisions will be made on a national level, therefore, please continue to support your children as we want to ensure that we do not lose this opportunity for learning as a result of any potential closure.

5 Will the school be open for childcare?

No.

6 What will staff be doing?

Teachers will be expected to provide work for pupils and be accessible (alongside some TAs) for online communication for a period of time each day during term time. TA staff will have training programmes that they will be accessing. Admin staff will be working from home. Cleaning staff will be in school carrying out a deep cleaning exercise.

7 Can I keep my child off school as a precaution?

No. It has been made clear to all schools that the normal attendance arrangements are in place. Any unauthorised absences will be logged and could lead to fines. If the schools are open, they remain open for all pupils and attendance is compulsory barring the usual acceptable reasons for absence. If you have a child of increased vulnerability, as a precautionary measure we advise you contact your consultant/111 for specific guidance and assurances.

8 Where can I get more information?

The Department for Education coronavirus helpline is available to answer questions about COVID-19 relating to education and children's social care. Staff, parents and young people can contact this helpline as follows:

Phone: 0800 046 8687

Opening hours: 8am to 6pm (Monday to Friday)

You can keep up to date with advice by consulting the Public Health England website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/coronavirus-covid-19-uk-government-response>

Or the NHS website: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>