



HIGH HESKET C of E SCHOOL (VC)

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Tuesday 17th March 2020

Dear Parents,

Firstly, I would like to take this opportunity to thank those of you who have sent messages of support or kind words over the last few days. The situation relating to Coronavirus is an extremely challenging one for everyone in our school and wider community and the situation is changing rapidly along with the advice and guidance. I would like to reassure parents that we are trying to keep everything as normal and as calm as we can for the children within school although we have had to make some alterations to our normal routines and practices, including regular hand washing intervals.

I am sure you will be aware that new government announcements were made last night which have altered the current guidance relating to self-isolation and responding to possible symptoms. The current guidance now states:

- **Anyone with a high temperature or a new, continuous cough should remain at home.**
- **If there is more than one person in the household and any one person presents with these symptoms, all members should self-isolate for 14 days.**

More information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>. Unfortunately, this guidance will mean that anyone who is currently self-isolating due to possible Coronavirus symptoms will now need to do so for 14 days instead of the original 7. This will also now need to extend to any siblings that we have in school.

We are aware that this is a very difficult time and we fully appreciate your support with the current situation, especially as we are having to make some very difficult decisions within school which may involve sending children who present with possible symptoms home at times. We are not taking any of the decisions that we make lightly as we know that the new guidance will impact heavily on families and their ability to access work and school. However, we must follow government guidance and exercise caution to keep our school community safe. We can only make judgements based on how a child presents in school and based on the guidance we have been given but we are happy to discuss anything through in detail if you feel that it is needed. We do have staff and pupils in school who are particularly vulnerable individuals, which I am sure is the same in many of your own households and extended families.

The new government guidance relating to self-isolation and to protecting vulnerable groups may also impact on our ability to fully staff the school. Please be aware that we will do everything that we can to keep the school running as smoothly as possible but we may need to make some changes to class structures, lunchtime routines etc should the need arise. Due to current staffing shortages in the kitchen, we may need to make some alterations to our normal menus and would appreciate your understanding with this.

We have been asked by some parents as to whether there is any work available for the children who are currently absent from school. We utilise a range of online platforms and websites in different year groups and so will be sending home a login sheet for your child which will enable them to use different online activities as homework if they are well enough for the time being. These will vary depending on the year group of your child and we are currently exploring a range of additional options should they be needed. We are also conscious that we were unable to go ahead with some of our Parent's Evening appointments. If any of the class teachers feel that there is any urgent information that they should share at this point in the academic year, they will contact you by telephone. Alternatively, you are also welcome to arrange an opportunity to speak with your child's class teacher by telephone if you feel there is anything you wish to discuss.

Please find attached a letter from Cumbria County Council which we have been asked to share with you all. I will continue to update you as the need arises and thank you all again for your ongoing support and understanding.

Yours sincerely,
Mrs A Harvey
Headteacher