



# Sir Graham Balfour School

Member of Sir Graham Balfour Multi-Academy Trust

Our Ref: LDB / VM

17<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

## LATEST INFORMATION RE CORONAVIRUS

Now that we are having daily briefings from the Government, please be assured that I will communicate anything of relevance to you as parents and carers of children in our school, whenever new information or instructions emerge. As I am sure you are aware, the Government advice changed last night:

- *The entire household should stay at home for 14 days if any member of your household exhibits the symptoms of a new, continuous cough or a high temperature (37.8 degrees or above).*

I am writing to you today to ask you, please, do follow the above advice, should it be necessary to do so. As we all know now, we are going to be in this for the long run, and if we can do our bit to reduce the spread of the virus, then we will be helping everyone ultimately. Please **do not** send your child to school if they are showing the above symptoms, and please try to make arrangements to collect your child quickly, should they start to show these symptoms during the school day. (Please do let us know asap if any of the contact details we have for you have changed in recent times). I also urge you, please, to make the best decision for your child and family – we are not medically trained professionals and therefore not qualified to give you advice on medical conditions.

The following is advice lifted directly from the Government website <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection> which was updated on 16<sup>th</sup> March:

- *if you live alone and you have symptoms of coronavirus illness (COVID-19), however mild, stay at home for **7 days** from when your symptoms started. (See [ending isolation](#) section below for more information)*
- *if you live with others and you or one of them 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. (See [ending isolation](#) section below for more information)*
- *if you can, move any vulnerable individuals (such as the elderly and those with underlying health conditions) out of your home, to stay with friends or family for the duration of the home isolation period*
- *if you cannot move vulnerable people out of your home, stay away from them as much as possible*
- *if you have coronavirus symptoms:*

- do **not** go to a GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital
- you do not need to contact 111 to tell them you're staying at home
- testing for coronavirus is not needed if you're staying at home
- plan ahead and ask others for help to ensure that you can successfully stay at home and consider what can be done for vulnerable people in the household
- ask your employer, friends and family to help you to get the things you need to stay at home
- wash your hands regularly for 20 seconds, each time using soap and water, or use hand sanitiser
- if you feel you cannot cope with your symptoms at home, or your condition gets worse, or your symptoms do not get better after 7 days, then use the [NHS 111 online](#) coronavirus service. If you do not have internet access, call NHS 111. For a medical emergency dial 999

Over recent days, we have received communication from around 20 families, that they are choosing to self-isolate due to the vulnerability of another member of the family. As a school, we support this move and will ensure work is sent home or is available electronically, in order to keep students well occupied whilst in isolation.

Some of you with children in Years 11 and 13 will be anxious to know what will happen with public exams, since they are now rapidly approaching. Believe me, we are just as keen to find out and I will let you know as soon as anything is decided by the Government and Ofqual. For now, it is important to maintain normality with these, and all students. We are still operating normally, finishing assessments and revising for the exams. Please help us to maintain the momentum by ensuring your son or daughter is continuing to revise for their exams in the evenings.

Next, I need to talk to you about how the disease and/or self-isolation could affect the running of the school. Over coming days and weeks, if a significant enough number of our staff fall ill or need to self-isolate, then we will have to plan to at the very least, partially close the school to some year groups. It may well mean that we retain only some years in school, who may be supervised by teachers of subjects other than their specialism.

You will not be surprised that we will aim to keep Year 11 and 13 in for as long as possible, until the government decides what it is doing about closure, or until such a time that we believe it is not operationally safe to keep the school open. Given the speed of developments re self-isolation, it may be that year groups are sent home quickly, or told not to come in the following day. It may be that the school is forced to close with only minimal warning. Whilst I do understand the strain this will put some of you under, I ask you to nonetheless prepare for this eventuality in the coming days.

Should the school be required to close fully or partially, we will alert you in the normal ways, via email, text and a post on our website. We will also let you know when school will re-open by the same means.

I understand that these are worrying times for all of us. In school, we are all doing our best to retain a sense of calm and reassurance. Your children are asking us lots of questions and we are keeping them well informed by assemblies and notices at House Time.

I thank you for your understanding and support in these troubling times.

Yours faithfully



**Mrs L D Beck**  
**Headteacher**