Dear Parents,

**RE: Coronavirus**

This email contains important information regarding the on-going situation with coronavirus. I encourage all parents to read the information in full for the benefit of everyone in our school community.

You may be aware that the government in the Republic of Ireland has announced yesterday that all schools, colleges and childcare settings are to close starting today until 29 March as part of its strategy to delay the spread of coronavirus. Whilst the British government have not taken the same decision, we have to be prepared for this eventuality.

In the spirit of openness, I am writing to update you on the development of the school’s response to the Coronavirus outbreak, following yesterday’s UK government meetings and [latest Public Health England (PHE) advice](https://nam11.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.gov.uk%2Fguidance%2Fcoronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public&data=02%7C01%7C%7C658a9e9b276740f42a3e08d7c6afe290%7C84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaaaaaaaaa%7C1%7C0%7C637196331028525103&sdata=paSlWLBpRCAlh%2FXtjPysOCE2neP5b6qUYl1Dj1n9jFw%3D&reserved=0) which you may find helpful.

**Introduction**

The Senior Leadership Team is meeting regularly to review the latest government guidance and coordinate our response. We are following advice and guidance from the relevant health authorities, in particular the NHS – specifically Public Health England (PHE) - and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO).

The government’s focus has moved to the second phase of ‘Delay’ and in addition to the continued advice for regular and thorough hand-washing, it has now included a requirement for anyone with a new, continuous cough or temperature, however mild the symptoms, to self-isolate for seven days and **we are now requesting all the members of our school community to follow this if necessary.** We know of one family in school who is already self-isolating on the basis of this new requirement.

The age of the children in our school means they are in the lowest risk category unless they have underlying health conditions and to our knowledge no one in the school has had contact with anyone infected.

**Priorities**

In light of recent actions taken by other countries to close educational establishments we must be mindful that this remains a possibility in the UK, even though yesterdays’ advice is for schools to remain open. Even if not required to close, we may have to consider limiting some of our activities and are drawing up contingency plans for all areas of school life, including:

·         Health, pastoral and medical support

The health and wellbeing of all our pupils are paramount. Young children are inquisitive and they cannot escape the news about coronavirus which has entirely pervaded our society. Maintaining a calm atmosphere in school is vital and we are sharing information in an age-appropriate manner. Should your child need to self-isolate, please do contact us with any concerns about how your child may be impacted if unable to come to school.

·         Educational continuity

We are setting in place provision for remote learning via an online platform.

·         Trips, visits, fixtures and events

We appreciate the significant disappointment caused by the postponement or cancellation of activities, and are considering benefits vs risks for all trips, fixtures and events on a case by case basis. We have a number of residential visits taking place after Easter so we will take into account the educational merit, the destination, accommodation arrangements and itinerary before deciding whether to proceed. We will notify parents at the earliest opportunity of any changes to planned activities. I am sure you understand much of this will be outside our control.

·         Infrastructure & Operations

We are tightening our protocols for visitors and reviewing the maintenance of the school buildings and facilities, including IT services required to enable remote learning, on-going cleaning of high traffic areas and high use surfaces,  and any necessary deep cleaning.

**Remote Learning**

School has been planning for an enforced closure and we are putting in measures to provide remote learning opportunities for the children via an online classroom. We acknowledge that an enforced closure will be stressful for all families; especially where both parents work and are unable to work from home. We will endeavour to support parents in helping their child access their learning whilst at home and we are in the process of compiling user-friendly guides for parents to help ease the process.

In school, we currently use an app called SeeSaw which allows teachers to post activities for the children to complete. The children can then photograph and upload or post work back electronically to teachers for feedback. All the children in Transition-FIV are familiar with this platform as we use it regularly and it can also be accessed via the web on a PC. Instructions for how to access SeeSaw will be emailed separately should the need arise.

Where it is possible for exercise books to be sent home, we will do so but we will need a means of the teachers being able to provide on-going feedback. We have surveyed the Junior children with regard to their home access to a PC or tablet device. Where pupils do not have such access, a school iPad would be sent home for them to use. All children in Transition and Remove would be provided with a school iPad to use. Our iPads are insured for home use but we would urge families to ensure the children handle the iPads with care and respect. We will need to keep a log of which iPad has been issued to each child as part of our insurance requirements for our asset register.

As well as activities to keep basic skills sharp in English and Maths, children may be asked to complete an independent learning project. Teachers would direct progress of the project every day or so to keep the children on track.

As the children in LKG/KG are younger and much of the day is spent engaging with continuous provision of activities centred on learning through play, the online classroom is not appropriate as a means of providing remote learning. Instead, Mrs Giles and Miss Sibson would contact parents daily by email to provide details of learning activities which the children can do.

*Further information on how remote learning will operate will follow should a school closure be enforced.*

**Guidance**

We have put safeguards in place to remain compliant with relevant guidance, accessible via the links below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/coronavirus-covid-19-uk-government-response>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-action-plan/coronavirus-action-plan-a-guide-to-what-you-can-expect-across-the-uk>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19>

**Hygiene**

We are taking additional steps to support the health and wellbeing of our community, primarily through extra cleaning and widespread provision of hand sanitisers in classrooms and communal areas. Children continue to be reminded about the benefits of using tissues if they need to cough or sneeze and the importance of hand washing. Posters are displayed at key locations in school encouraging good habits and personal hygiene.

The best way to prevent coronavirus spreading is to wash your hands more than usual, for 20 seconds, using soap and water (preferable) or a hand sanitiser. Please remind your children to follow these guidelines and this NHS video, which we have shared with the children, may also be useful: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S9VjeIWLnEg>

Although we still do not have any reported cases of coronavirus in school, if the school is placed under enforced closure we would take the opportunity to conduct undertake a full deep clean of the premises.

**Visitors**

Potential visitors to Froebelian who wish to agree a visit in advance, or who arrive unannounced at the Office, will be required to comply with national guidance. Protocols are now in place for a range of visitors, including contractors, and pupils/staff from other schools, including those attending sports fixtures. Only those individuals who are deemed to present no heightened level of risk will be admitted on site.

**Travel**

May we ask families to follow government advice if they visit any country named on the government [website](https://nam11.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.gov.uk%2Fguidance%2Fcoronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public&data=02%7C01%7C%7C658a9e9b276740f42a3e08d7c6afe290%7C84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaaaaaaaaa%7C1%7C0%7C637196331028525103&sdata=paSlWLBpRCAlh%2FXtjPysOCE2neP5b6qUYl1Dj1n9jFw%3D&reserved=0) as a concern, or if any family member does so. In such circumstances, or in light of even a potential threat from such travel or connections, please inform school of this situation as soon as possible.

[Official travel advice to and from the UK](https://nam11.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.gov.uk%2Fforeign-travel-advice&data=02%7C01%7C%7C658a9e9b276740f42a3e08d7c6afe290%7C84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaaaaaaaaa%7C1%7C0%7C637196331028535098&sdata=MPdaIeVBQWb7kKPwadU7eoD2ndJnFb6n%2FO98JXfc%2FQI%3D&reserved=0) is being regularly updated,  so please bear in mind that entry and exit restrictions may change, as well as the advice on self-isolation for different geographical locations which could affect you upon your return to the UK. In due course, we will require all members of the community to self-declare whether they have recently undertaken or are planning foreign travel to any destination, as the list of countries at high-risk continues to grow.

**Communications**

The situation is dynamic and our response as a school community needs to be swift. We greatly appreciate parents’ patience and understanding during this challenging period. Supporting the children and keeping them calm in what is a frightening and omnipresent situation is critical. Should there be any developments that affect the running of the school, we will be in touch with parents as a matter of urgency.

Kind regards,

Mrs Catherine Dodds

**Catherine Dodds | Headteacher**

Apple Teacher

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The Froebelian School, Horsforth, Leeds LS18 4LB

*Giving a flying start to the citizens of tomorrow*

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