

Dear Parent / Carer,

I am writing to you with some specific advice about the Coronavirus outbreak and our plans for the coming weeks. As I am sure you will understand, it is hard to predict what the impact on schools might be, but we have taken steps to plan as best as we can for future events and would appreciate your support and understanding.

### Awareness

In forms this week, the students have been given a talk about the virus and the steps they could help prevent or delay its spread. This was based on NHS and government advice about the importance of regular handwashing and avoiding coughing/sneezing over other people. Posters reinforcing this advice are now displayed around the school site.

### Hand washing

We have increased our stock of liquid soap to ensure that students and staff can wash their hands more frequently. We have encouraged students to wash their hands in the basins in the toilets at break and lunchtime as well as on arrival at school. The school site is open to students from 8.00 am each day, giving 45 minutes for students to make their way to the handwashing facilities without impact on learning time at all.

We will ensure soap dispensers remain topped up and aim to clean toilets more frequently. There are plenty of opportunities throughout the school day, outside of lesson times, that students can wash their hands.

### General Cleaning

We are prioritising certain areas of the building; the surfaces that people touch frequently such as handrails and door handles. Our site team are working at full capacity and, in the short term, this reduces our ability to pick up litter from around the site. All students need to play their part by putting rubbish in the bins provided and keeping the site neat and tidy.

### Contingency Planning

As the path of the Coronavirus outbreak develops, we will be following advice from the Department for Education and the Government. This might, at some point, involve temporarily closing the school on a full/partial basis. If this happens, please note:

- We have remote access to the parent and student database and can send text messages to all families to keep them updated. Please ensure we have your up to date email address and mobile phone number.
- We can update our school website and Facebook page remotely and you should check this daily in the event of closure.
- We will set up an email account called [schoolclosure@olcc.lancs.sch.uk](mailto:schoolclosure@olcc.lancs.sch.uk) which will only be activated if we do have to close. As I am sure you will understand though, this should only be used as a method of contact should your query be urgent.

### **Student Learning**

It is vital that, if the school closes, students continue to work. Whilst there is no substitute for being in a classroom with a teacher we will aim to put as many resources on the website as possible, especially for Year 11, Year 12 and Year 13 in regards to revision etc. If we get notice of closure, then we will send students home with the books and materials we think they need.

You can help us by doing the following:

- Making sure your child accesses the school website to look what learning or revision resources are available for their year group.
- Making sure your child has somewhere quiet to work, In the event of an extended closure, we ask that parents try to ensure conditions at home are conducive to good quality work each day.
- Effective revision is really important between now and the exams this summer.
- Encourage your child to read books.

### **School Trips**

As present, all our planned trips and visits are going ahead. We are monitoring official advice and will communicate with parents/carers on a specific basis should this become necessary. Please remember that short-notice changes to itineraries may be due to circumstances beyond the school's control.

### **Examinations**

The Government and the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ), the body which runs public exams are monitoring the situation with the Coronavirus. As any impact on exams will affect the whole country, we will follow any official guidance and keep parents updated.

### **Staff Absence**

It is possible that the school may need to operate as normal but with a higher number of staff absent than usual. Government action to 'relax' the law concerning class size doesn't apply to secondary schools, where we are constrained by the physical size of our classrooms and by the availability of our specialist teachers. In order to protect the chances of our exam year groups in the face of staff absence we will consider:

- Amalgamating classes to make best use of our available teachers
- Setting private study work to be undertaken in large group settings
- Sending some classes/year groups home in order to maintain safe staff to student ratios on site. Clearly this would be a last resort as our intention is to educate all students as normally as possible.

Please be aware that staff will have to follow advice from Public Health England about attending work if they have been in contact with cases of Coronavirus and may not be able to attend work for a short period even though they want to do so.

### **Further Information and Avoiding Anxiety**

The Government and the NHS have made lots of advice about Coronavirus (also called Covid-19) available on their websites. I recommend that you look to those sources of information for updates and news about the virus and avoid listening to rumour and second hand information from other sources.

Clearly this is a developing situation and, at the time of writing, the risk to health and the smooth running of the school is deemed low to moderate. However, that alone can cause anxiety and therefore I am sure you agree we can work together to help reduce this worry in our young people.

You know your own child best, but together we should:

- Do our best not to sensationalise or overdramatise the issue.
- Steer students away from some of the news coverage and social media channels.
- Stick to known facts rather than speculation, and remind the students to do the same.

There are a small number of students and staff with suppressed immune systems. They and their families will know best how to stay safe but we will support these groups as best as we can, taking into account advice from the NHS 111 service and government websites.

I realise that the situation and the related disruption will cause worry and anxiety. It is understandable that we will all deal with the stress in different ways but please be aware that it may be impossible for me and my team to satisfy all parents/carers with the decisions we have to make in regard to school closure or other significant interventions. Our resources may be stretched for some time, so please try and support us as much as possible and take careful consideration when posting anything on social media in relation to the school. Our staff will be doing their very best to protect you, your children and their education.

Yours sincerely

Helen Seddon  
Headteacher