



13.3.2020

Dear parents, carers and members of the school community,

Yesterday the Government announced the UK has moved to the 'delay' phase of its plan to tackle Coronavirus. In preparation for the announcement, this week I have been in regular communication with the Highlands School Governing Body and have attended meetings with the Chief Executive and the Director of Education of Enfield Council. I am writing to you to inform you of the measures we are taking at Highlands School in response to Government guidance and what contingencies we have in place in the eventuality of school closure.

To make sure Highlands School is clean and any infection is less likely to be spread around the school, our PFI partners Pinnacle, who are responsible for facilities management, have increased the cleaning of the site with particular focus on toilets and eating areas. They are routinely wiping door handles and, if required, will carry out a deep clean of the building. To avoid the spread of the virus the main advice from Government remains regular handwashing for 20 seconds with soap.

The UK's chief medical adviser Prof Chris Whitty yesterday said that anyone who develops a persistent cough or fever should self isolate for a period of seven days. This is the guidance that we are giving to staff and students. Normal routines for informing the school of student absence should be followed.

Students may bring hand sanitiser to school and use it. The UK Government document 'COVID-19: guidance for educational settings' ([link below](#)), is clear that, "Face masks for the general public, pupils or students, or staff are not recommended to protect from infection, as there is no evidence of benefit from their use outside healthcare environments." Therefore, they will not be allowed in school.

Contingencies in the event of confirmed cases of Coronavirus at Highlands School or in the event of partial or full school closure.

'COVID-19: guidance for educational settings' states that, in the event of a confirmed case, 'a risk assessment will be undertaken by the educational establishment with advice from the local Health Protection Team. In most cases, closure of the childcare or education setting will be unnecessary but this will be a local decision based on various factors such as establishment size and pupil mixing.' If the school does have a confirmed case Pinnacle will carry out a deep clean of the school before it reopens.

Partial closure of school due to staff absence

Please note that in the event of partial or full school closure, all communication with parents will be through email and the school website.

It is possible that, although we will not be instructed to close by Public Health England, we may find it difficult to run the school as normal. This would be, for example, if we did not have enough staff to run the school because of absence through illness or dependency.

In these circumstances:

- We remain open for as many year groups as possible, with particular focus on years 10, 11 and 13 as they have GCSE and A-level examinations in May and June.
- If school is not fully open we will try to highlight the risk of partial closure the day before.
- If, on any day, the school cannot fully open, we will inform students and parents by 7.45am.

Full closure of Highlands School

If the Government closes all schools or if PHE advises Highlands to close we will inform parents by email and on the school website. Staff may or may not be allowed to attend school in this eventuality but, either way, Highlands School staff will be working hard to ensure the impact of the closure on students' learning is kept to a minimum. Please carefully read the information below about how students will be supported in the eventuality of school closure:

Safeguarding:

Highlands will maintain its commitment to safeguarding students. Emergency contacts to report safeguarding concerns will be published and we will make regular checks on our most vulnerable students.

Learning:

This morning the UK's chief medical adviser Prof Chris Whitty said that if schools close, they could close for a protracted period of time. Photocopying resources and work for such a prolonged period of time is not practical, particularly as we may have very little notice if we have to shut. We will be using the school's Google domain, the 'G Suite', as the primary means of setting and monitoring work.

The G Suite includes Gmail, the Google Drive, Google Classroom and access to the Google versions of Word, PowerPoint and Excel. If the school closes teachers will be expected to log on daily and set work for the classes they would normally be teaching. Resources can be uploaded. Students can ask questions and have them answered. Work can be electronically submitted and marked. The school can move to the G Suite at very short notice and we can teach using the G Suite for as long as the school remains closed.

What can parents and carers do to support this?

Highlands students use the G Suite in all of their computing lessons and in some other subjects so they are familiar with it. For use at home, students will need access to the internet and to a suitable device (laptop, computer or tablet). If internet access or access to a suitable device is likely to be a problem in the event of school closure, please email Mr Jem Osman, the assistant headteacher overseeing this part of the contingency plan. Mr Osman's email address is: osmanj@highlearn.uk.

Finally, to fully train all staff in the use of the G Suite and to start moving our resources into the Google Drive, Highlands is cancelling the year 12 parents' evening on Wednesday 18th March, next week. This will allow all of our staff to remain in school for an extended period of time to make sure that, in the eventuality of school closure, learning can immediately move online, uninterrupted, for as long as the school might be closed. Staff members will email year 12 parents with important information and we will rearrange the parents' evening in due course.

I would like to thank students and the school community for their calm and stoic response to the Coronavirus so far. Please monitor the school website and emails for further updates.

Mr McInerney

Headteacher

Link to 'COVID-19: guidance for educational settings':

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