3 March 2020

**Re: Information about coronavirus**

Dear Parents,

We want to continue to reassure parents and carers that school is open as normal. We are monitoring the situation and are following guidance from the Department for Education and Public Health England.

**Latest advice**

The latest advice applies to people who have recently travelled to one of the countries where coronavirus outbreaks have occurred.

Visit the following link for up to date information and advice for travellers returning from affected countries: [www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public)

**Information about the coronavirus**

A coronavirus is a type of virus. As a group, coronaviruses are common across the world. COVID-19 is a new strain of coronavirus first identified in Wuhan City, China in January 2020.

The incubation period of COVID-19 is between 2 to 14 days. This means that if a person remains well 14 days after contact with someone with confirmed coronavirus, they have not been infected.

The following symptoms may develop in the 14 days after exposure to someone who has COVID-19 infection:

- cough
- difficulty in breathing
- fever

Generally, these infections can cause more severe symptoms in people with weakened immune systems, older people, and those with long-term conditions like diabetes, cancer and chronic lung disease. There is no evidence that children are more affected than other age groups – **very few cases have been reported in children**.

**How the coronavirus is spread?**

The latest information suggests that coronavirus is most likely to spread when there is close contact (within 2 metres) with an infected person. There are two routes by which people could become infected:

- secretions can be directly transferred into the mouths or noses of people who are nearby (within 2 metres) or could be inhaled into the lungs.
it is also possible that someone may become infected by touching a surface or object that has been contaminated with respiratory secretions and then touching their own mouth, nose, or eyes (such as touching a door knob or shaking hands then touching own face).

There is currently no good evidence that people who do not have symptoms are infectious to others.

**Preventing the spread of infection**

There are simple steps that you can take to protect yourself, your family and others:

- Wash your hands regularly with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub available to buy in most supermarkets and community pharmacies.
- ‘Catch it, Bin it, Kill it’. Catch coughs and sneezes in a tissue ensuring the nose and mouth are fully covered to prevent any spray escaping. Dispose of the tissue as soon as possible in the bin and wash your hands or use alcohol-based hand rub to kill any germs.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces in the home and work environment.

**What we are doing at St Thomas’ to prevent the spread of infection**

- Every class has an anti-bacterial wash and children will be asked to wash their hand regularly. If you wish your child to have a small hand sanitiser – please make sure the bottle is labelled with the child’s name and is kept in their drawer or bag. The use will be a designated times lead by staff. Please note – school does not take responsibility if it goes missing, as school is providing sanitiser).
- Tissues are available in every class.
- The caretaker and cleaning staff are daily disinfecting areas where the virus can spread eg door handles, tables etc.
- The children will be spoken to about washing their hands thoroughly and using/disposing of tissues appropriately.
- School will keep you up to date with any necessary changes to current guidance – please see school website (parents tab).

Kind regards

Mrs Sherwood