



27 February 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

I am writing to you with specific advice about the Coronavirus outbreak and would appreciate your careful attention to the contents of this letter and request your ongoing support.

### Information about the virus (taken from Government Guidance)

A coronavirus is a type of virus. As a group, coronaviruses are common across the world. COVID19 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 COVID19 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.

### The school ski trip to France

Durham Johnston's school ski trip is due to leave for France on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> February.

Please note that our ski trip is to **Alpe H'auz in France and that students travel via Grenoble, 372 Kilometres from the area of Northern Italy that is currently affected.**

Public Health/Gov.UK advice is that if students or teachers returning from affected areas show symptoms (detailed above) they should self-isolate. Whilst our ski trip clearly does not visit an affected area, any students or staff returning from the trip showing symptoms (detailed above) should self-isolate in accordance with government advice.

### Half-Term holidays

Clearly, some parents and students may have been abroad this half-term, so this advice applies to them too. The quarantined towns in Italy are Bertinico, Casalpusterlengo, Castelgerundo, Castiglione d'Adda, Codogno, Fombio, Maleo, San Fiorano, Somaglia, Terranova dei Passerini - all in Lodi province in Lombardy - and Vo' Euganeo in Padova province, Veneto.



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The updated advice means people returning from these Italian towns, or Iran, parts of South Korea and Hubei province in China - where the outbreak began - are being asked to call NHS 111, stay indoors and avoid contact with others, even if they do not have symptoms.

### **Government Guidance**

Like all public organisations, we are monitoring the situation very carefully and are following the advice and guidance offered by Public Health England/Gov. UK. The guidance offered is very clear regarding those returning from school trips and we will act in accordance with that advice. The Gov.UK advice for schools and educational setting was shared with parents and carers via the school website on Wednesday 26th February and will be shared via the Friday Bulletin and School App. We will continue to follow the very clear advice given and will update parents if there are any changes to that advice, or in relation to the areas of concern for those who have travelled recently.

<https://www.durhamjohnston.org.uk/news/2020-02-26-government-advice-regarding-covid-19>

The nature of social media and current news coverage means that whilst important information is rightly shared, a sense of alarm and panic can be generated very quickly. Please act upon the very clear advice offered by Gov.UK. If you continue to be worried, then please call 111, but do not keep your child off school if they have not developed symptoms. If you have visited an affected area and have developed the above symptoms, please self-isolate and seek medical advice. If you have any further questions please feel free to contact us, but medical advice should be sought from the NHS. As a public organisation, we will always act in accordance with national medical advice.

Yours faithfully,

**A J O'Sullivan**  
**Headteacher**