

16 March 2020



**THE
COWPLAIN
SCHOOL**

Headteacher

Mr IR Gates MA NPQH

Dear Parent

The Coronavirus outbreak is something that is unprecedented and is almost inevitably going to result in all of us having to do things differently for a while. Having received the latest information and news from the government I now want to outline the implications for us at The Cowplain School.

The government has announced that, at this present time, schools will remain open, and we will work as hard as possible to keep Cowplain open. Therefore, I have taken steps to ensure we have as many staff on site as possible on any given day, with non-urgent visits, meetings and professional learning courses cancelled. We will, however, continue to run as many events for students and parents as we can, including things like parents evenings, although reserve the right to cancel them should the need arise. Of course, we have already increased our hygiene measures around the school site to try and limit the spread of germs; our Site Manager, Mrs Webb, will write to you with more details about these increased measures.

It is likely we will increasingly see staff becoming ill or having to self-isolate. At this point, we may take measures such as combining classes or changing lessons so we can keep children on site. However, if it becomes impossible to safely supervise students due to high staff absence rates, it may be that I have to take the very difficult decision to temporarily close the school, either in part to specific year groups, or entirely. The very nature of this possibility means that this decision would have to be taken at short notice, possibly when students are already on their way to school or even during the school day. Please be assured that any decision I make will not be taken lightly and will be made with the best intentions to safeguard students, parents and staff.

In the event that we are forced to close, we will provide resources and support for students as efficiently as we can via INSIGHT. We will use the same system currently used for Home Learning which your child accesses using his/her school login details; you will also be able to see this work on your own INSIGHT account. If you have mislaid your account details, please email office@cowplainschool.co.uk including the words "ONLINE TEACHING" in the subject line. Mrs Clemas will also write to you separately with details of generic resources your child can access so that he/she is able to complete work at home.

We currently have no reported cases of coronavirus, but staff have been instructed to self-isolate if required, following Government guidelines. We would like to encourage parents/carers to do the same for any children who present with symptoms. If you need to keep your child home from school:

- Please make it clear whether your child is ill, self-isolating or has a confirmed case of the virus. If he/she is self-isolating, please tell us when the symptoms started
- Please keep us informed of his/her ongoing condition.

If children present with symptoms whilst at school, our school matron will ask you to collect them.

A few parents have chosen to keep their child at home until the pandemic has passed, to minimise risk of infection. As a parent myself, I respect every parent's desire to do what they think is best for their child; however, whilst we remain open, and the government's decision is that we should, we cannot provide individual work for those parents who wish to keep their child at home for that reason.

I have been struck by how mature our students have been about the situation. Can I ask that you continue to instil in them the need to behave well and follow the instructions of staff. Frankly, both school staff and parents are very busy at this time and our efforts need to be on the welfare of all, not focussing on any silly, petty or poor behaviour.

I know this is a worrying time for all parents, students and staff but, as I have come to expect at Cowplain over the last 7 years whilst I have been Headteacher, we will work together as a team to ensure we do the best for all stakeholders in the school.

Yours sincerely

Mr I R Gates
Headteacher

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