



**Abbots Ripton Church of England Primary School**  
Wennington Road Abbots Ripton Huntingdon PE28 2LT  
Tel: (01487) 773318  
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Headteacher : **Mrs Claire Matthews**  
Interim Assistant Head Teacher : **Miss Slater**  
Interim Assistant Head Teacher : **Mrs Wilcock**

Coronavirus Update

18<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

As promised at this challenging time, I am writing to update you with the current situation at school. However, the advice to schools remains the same, we are to remain open unless instructed by the Department of Education or Public Health England.

Following further briefings by the government giving additional advice about restricted travel and social gatherings and on the vulnerable groups who should be self-isolating, we have also received further advice from the Local Authority which has impacted on the staffing of the school.

Anyone who is currently affected by possible infection within their family must now take 14 days self isolation rather than 7. This means that if anyone in your household is self isolating because they are showing any symptoms (high temperature and/or a new continuous cough) then **all** family members should stay at home too, including children.

In addition to this we have been told that anyone who has one or more of the following underlying health conditions should self-isolate;

- chronic (long-term) respiratory diseases, such as asthma (that requires an inhaler or tablet steroid treatment, or has led to hospital admission in the past)
- chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), emphysema or bronchitis
- chronic heart disease, such as heart failure
- chronic kidney disease
- chronic liver disease, such as hepatitis
- chronic neurological conditions, such as Parkinson's disease, motor neurone disease, multiple sclerosis (MS), a learning disability or cerebral palsy
- diabetes
- problems with your spleen – for example, sickle cell disease or if you have had your spleen removed
- a weakened immune system as the result of conditions such as HIV and AIDS, or medicines such as steroid tablets or chemotherapy
- being seriously overweight (a BMI of 40 or above)

Obviously all of this advice relates to both you and your family. We are very concerned about any child who has one or more of the medical conditions in the list above and I would urge parents of a child with any of these conditions to seriously consider if they should come to school. I would completely understand and agree with a decision to keep your child off school. Please email us if this is the case for your family.

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Similarly, the advice also relates to our amazing staff team. We will of course continue to follow the government's directive to remain open for as long as we can with staffing levels that mean children can be taught in a safe environment. We will not take the decision to close lightly however we are aware that several other schools locally are closing or have partial closures due to staff absence. At present, we are able to staff safely but have agreed to cancel all areas of our school life which can place an additional burden on our staffing and day to day running. This includes cancelling:

- The Mother's day shop planned for Friday 20<sup>th</sup>
- The Kandinsky sharing assembly planned for Monday 23<sup>rd</sup>
- The Stations of the Cross activity with the church on Monday 30<sup>th</sup>
- The Year 2 football festival planned for 31<sup>st</sup> March
- The end of term church service planned for 3<sup>rd</sup> April
- The end of term Easter Egg hunt planned for 3<sup>rd</sup> April
- Van Gogh visits to the Wild wood

I have listed some frequently asked questions below which I hope will be helpful:

#### **What is the school currently doing to protect and support children and staff?**

- We are asking all children to wash their hands on arrival at school and after break times.
- If we see a child sneeze, blow their nose or touch their mouth we are asking them to go and wash their hands.
- All children are being asked to keep a tissue in their pocket to sneeze into and all classrooms have a box of tissues as well as soap.
- We have spoken to the children about hygiene and how to deal with anxiety about the current situation in an age appropriate way.
- We are limiting visitors to the school and all visitors who do need to come into school, are asked to wash their hands as soon as they arrive.
- Our cleaning schedule now focusses on wiping down door handles, table tops and the toilet areas.
- We are telephoning parents to collect their children if they develop any symptoms whilst at school. We have an area in school where such children can be isolated whilst being looked after until parents arrive.

#### **What can parents do to help the school?**

- If you or anyone listed on your emergency contacts have recently changed contact details, please inform the school office as soon as possible via the office email.
- Talk to your children about the coronavirus. It's a scary time and we should make sure children feel supported. BBC Newsround has regular updates which are child friendly and with this letter we have sent home a child friendly workbook which is really useful.
- Come and collect your child straight away, if we ask you to (we'll contact you if they become ill with either a temperature or a new, continuous cough).

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- Please keep your child at home in line with Government guidelines – see above. We have a new attendance code which means all absence related to the Coronavirus can be recorded so all absence for genuine reasons will be supported by school.
- We are busy planning how to keep learning happening in the event that we close so please do try logging in to our E-Learning platform as soon as possible – see previous letter. All children in Picasso and Kandinsky have been shown how to do this today. If you think that your child will need paper based activities to complete at home please let us know by email by the end of school on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> so that we can prepare home learning packs.
- Please try to stay positive!!!

#### **What happens if the school has to close?**

- We'll only close if we're either officially advised to do so or we don't have enough staff to keep the school open safely.
- In either case, we'll email all parents using the same email address that we use to send our newsletter to. We will also add it to the banner at the top of our school website. We will also ask the Chair of STARS to add this information to the Facebook page.
- We will inform you in exactly the same way about reopening.
- We are currently setting out our expectations on staff with regards to home learning and will update you of this as soon as we have finalised this.

Please keep in mind that we're only sending out this information to help the school community prepare. There are currently no plans to close!

Thank you for your support and understanding at this time. We know that many of you continue to be very anxious and we will do our best to keep you informed with the most up-to-date information as and when we receive it.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C Matthews', is written over a horizontal line.

Mrs Matthews  
Headteacher

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