



13th March 2020

www.talbothousetrust.co.uk

Dear Parents/Carers,

Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Update

Following my previous letter, I will be sending updates to parents and carers on an ongoing basis as the situation with Coronavirus develops.

Steps We Are Taking

As you know, a number of steps have been taken to minimise the risks at Talbot House Trust. These include:

- Notifying staff and parents/carers of key symptoms of Coronavirus and what to do if they have been to a high risk area;
- Giving guidance to all pupils on the importance of good personal hygiene, particularly in relation to handwashing and the use of tissues;
- Increasing cleaning of key areas with emphasis on touch points, e.g. door handles;
- Increasing the use of hand sanitisers for all staff, pupils and visitors;
- Providing tissues in all classrooms and offices and;
- Regularly checking that hand wash is available in the toilets.

The Current Situation and How it May Develop

Currently we have no known cases of pupils or staff having the Coronavirus. However, given the recent increase in cases in the UK and the Government's Chief Medical Officer's pronouncement that an epidemic in the UK is now highly likely, it seems inevitable that we will be affected to some degree at some point. As and when we do receive notification of a confirmed case, we will inform you and adhere to government guidance.

The most common symptoms are the onset of a new **continuous cough** and/or **high temperature**. If anyone displays symptoms however mild, **they must stay at home and not leave their house for 7 days from when the symptoms started**. If this applies to your child, please notify the school immediately and ensure that you confirm that you are self-isolating your child due to symptoms of Coronavirus infection. If your child is confirmed at any stage as having Coronavirus following testing, please notify the school. We will follow advice from Public Health England about tracing contacts and protecting other pupils and staff.

Another way in which staff and pupils may become affected is to become a primary contact. This means that they will have been informed that they have been in contact with a confirmed case and are required to self-isolate as a consequence, even if they are not displaying symptoms. After 14 days of self-isolation without symptoms, they can come out of isolation. We do not intend to notify parents if individuals are required to self-isolate as a consequence of being a primary contact. This is because current advice is that primary contacts are unlikely to be contagious unless they experience symptoms, in which case, they will be tested. A secondary contact is someone who has been close to a primary contact and the advice is that no action needs to be taken in such a circumstance.

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Individuals with Underlying Medical Issues

For most people, the COVID-19 virus is mild and young people do not appear to be particularly vulnerable. However, for some people, particularly the elderly and those with underlying medical issues, it can be more serious. Anyone who has an underlying medical condition, or may be more vulnerable, needs to be aware that it is highly likely in the coming weeks that we will see increased cases in the North East and therefore may be exposed to the virus. They should seek advice from their GP or other health professional as required.

Contingency Planning

With the possibility that staff and pupils may have to self-isolate over the coming weeks, we are putting plans in place to keep disruption to an absolute minimum where possible and full school closure will be a last resort. Specific details will follow as necessary in due course.

Key Actions for Parents/Carers

- Please continue to encourage your child to maintain good hygiene, including washing hands regularly.
- Please provide your child with tissues to bring to school, to catch a cough or a sneeze. Used tissues should be put in a bin as soon as possible.
- If you think your child has been in contact with someone with Coronavirus and/or develop symptoms that are a concern to you, please take the appropriate medical advice available at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public>
- Inform the school immediately if you think your child may have the virus or become a primary contact.

Further Advice

The Department for Education has launched a Coronavirus helpline to answer questions about COVID-19 related to education. Staff, parents/carers and young people can contact the helpline as follows:

Phone: 0800 046 8687

Email: DfE.coronavirushelpline@education.gov.uk

Opening Hours: 8am to 6pm (Monday to Friday)

We understand that this is a time of uncertainty, which can cause increased anxiety. We are working on a continuous disaster recovery plan and putting procedures in place in the event of a partial or full school closure. We will continue to review the situation and will adapt how we respond as things evolve, in accordance with government guidance. **We would greatly appreciate it if you can check the details we have on file for your child and update us by return of the enclosed form as soon as possible. Please include telephone numbers and email addresses as we will primarily use these methods of communication in the event of a school closure.** We will continue to keep you updated. If anyone has any concerns or questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely

FOR TALBOT HOUSE TRUST



Jo Reiling
Head of Development