

18<sup>th</sup> March 2020



## **FAO All Staff of Bradgate Education Partnership**

Dear All

### **Trust's Response to the Coronavirus (COVID 19)**

I now write to update you on the Trust's response to the Coronavirus outbreak. I am sure that this feels an unsettling time for us all, but I want to take this opportunity to provide you with the reassurance that the Trust remains positive and are working closely with all Head Teachers/Principals across the Trust to formulate a robust response.

At present the government are asking that schools remain open and we will continue to support the government with this approach. As public servants we do have responsibility to support the community and other public services to function at this time. We thank you all for your co-operation in this matter and assure you that as soon as the Trust receive guidance from the government to close schools then we will do so and communicate with you accordingly.

In the meantime, it is important that we try and keep ourselves and others as safe as possible, therefore we have asked Head Teachers/Principals to ensure that all non-essential activity is cancelled. Further to this we have provided some key information taken directly from the government website to help keep us all safe.

The following information we are providing to you comes directly from the Government website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/coronavirus-covid-19-uk-government-response>

### **Symptoms of Coronavirus**

The most common symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are a new, continuous cough or a high temperature. For most people, coronavirus (COVID-19) will be a mild infection.

### **Government Guidance for All Staff:**

1. If you have the above symptoms, however mild, stay at home and do not leave your house for 7 days from when your symptoms started. You do not need to call NHS 111 to go into self-isolation. If your symptoms worsen during home isolation or are no better after 7 days, contact NHS 111 online. If you have no internet access, you should call NHS 111. For a medical emergency dial 999.
2. Wash your hands more often than usual, for 20 seconds using soap and hot water, particularly after coughing, sneezing and blowing your nose, or after being in public areas where other people are doing so. Use hand sanitiser if that's all you have access to.

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3. To reduce the spread of germs when you cough or sneeze, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue, or your sleeve (not your hands) if you don't have a tissue, and throw the tissue away immediately. Then wash your hands or use a hand sanitising gel.
4. Clean and disinfect regularly touched objects and surfaces using your regular cleaning products to reduce the risk of passing the infection on to other people.

### **Social Distancing:**

The following advice has been provided by the Government:

Social distancing measures are steps you can take to reduce the social interaction between people. This will help reduce the transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19). They are:

- Avoid contact with someone who is displaying symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19). These symptoms include high temperature and/or new and continuous cough
- Avoid non-essential use of public transport, varying your travel times to avoid rush hour, when possible
- *Work from home, where possible. Your employer should support you to do this. Please refer to employer guidance for more information. \*\*\*\**
- Avoid large gatherings, and gatherings in smaller public spaces such as pubs, cinemas, restaurants, theatres, bars, clubs
- Avoid gatherings with friends and family. Keep in touch using remote technology such as phone, internet, and social media
- Use telephone or online services to contact your GP or other essential services

**\*\*\*\*** *Please note that given the position with the schools remaining open working from home isn't possible for everyone at this stage. We are currently developing our working from home and IT acceptable use guidance in preparation for the schools closing.*

### **Self-Isolation:**

Further advice from the Government updated on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2020:

- If you live alone and you have symptoms of coronavirus illness (COVID-19), however mild, stay at home for 7 days from when your symptoms started.
- If you live with others and you or one of them have symptoms of coronavirus, then all household members must stay at home and not leave the house for 14 days. The 14-day period starts from the day when the first person in the house became ill
- For anyone in the household who starts displaying symptoms, they need to stay at home for 7 days from when the symptoms appeared, regardless of what day they are on in the original 14-day isolation period. For example:

*Jack's son has been ill with coronavirus symptoms and is following guidance to self-isolate for 14 days, on the 13<sup>th</sup> day Jack started to get symptoms himself, Jack therefore has to self-isolate within the home for a further 7 days from the 13<sup>th</sup> day.*

### **Reporting Sickness Absence/Decision to Self-Isolate:**

Whilst the schools remain open we ask that all staff continue to report any absences in line with your schools reporting procedures. Your Head Teacher will re-iterate these to you in the coming days if you are unsure.

### **Sick Pay/Self Isolation Pay**

Any absences related to Coronavirus, pay will not be affected, staff will continue to receive full pay.

### **Vulnerable Groups**

The government have categorised those who they deem to be 'vulnerable groups', these are anyone who:

- Is over 70
- has an underlying health condition
- are pregnant

If you have an underlying health condition and you have concerns about the Coronavirus then please discuss this directly with your Head Teacher/Principal.

### **Pregnant Women**

The Trust have taken the decision to send all pregnant women home from work at this time until further notice. If you suspect or are in the early stages of pregnancy, please discuss this with your Head Teacher/Principal as soon as possible.

### **Personal Details Form**

All staff are being asked to complete a Personal Details form in readiness for the event that the schools will be closed, we need to ensure that staff are contactable via telephone and email. We also require next of kin details should you fall ill or become non-contactable during a school closure period. Please complete the form and return it to your Head Teacher/Principal as soon as possible.

### **Getting Ready for Home Working**

We are working closely with Head Teachers/Principals and IT services to 'get ready' for home working in readiness for school closure. We will of course update you on this as we move forward. If you do have any issues with any existing home working equipment, please ensure this is raised this week so that it can get sorted as soon as possible.

### **Employee Support Programme**

As always the Trust's Employee Support Programme is available to all staff and their close family. It provides free, confidential advice and counselling which is available via online and telephone formats.

### **Coming Days...**

Of course our response will change and develop as we continue to follow the government guidance. Please bear with us, we will endeavour to keep you updated as much as possible. If you do have any queries or concerns, please discuss this with your Head Teacher/Principal directly.

### **Finally...**

I want to thank you all for your commitment to the Trust, your schools and the local communities that we serve, our support to them is vital at this time. There will be some uncertainties along the way but I am sure that as we work together we can face these times as a strong team.

Yours Sincerely



**Gareth Nelmes**  
**Chief Executive Officer**

Enc: Govt Hand Wash Guidance, Employee Support Service Information



HM Government

**NHS**

# Coronavirus

## Wash your hands more often for 20 seconds

Use soap and water or a hand sanitiser when you:

- Get home or into work
- Blow your nose, sneeze or cough
- Eat or handle food



For more information and the Government's  
Action Plan go to [nhs.uk/coronavirus](https://nhs.uk/coronavirus)

CORONAVIRUS

**PROTECT  
YOURSELF  
& OTHERS**



This helpline offers you and your family counselling and advice on a variety of personal, family or workplace issues.

The service is paid for by your employer and is provided by a professional organisation, *Wellbeing Solutions Management*. There is no cost to you and all calls are confidential.

Whatever our age, background or role in life, from time to time we all have problems – whether personal, family, or work-related. Talking to a counsellor or an advisor can help us understand a problem, try a different approach or just learn how to cope with a situation that we can't change. Our aim is to help you find your own solution to whatever is worrying you.

### Confidentiality

This is a confidential and anonymous service provided by an independent organisation. No personal or identifying information is communicated to your employer.

Only in the most extreme and unusual circumstances would your confidentiality and anonymity ever be broken, for example, if our clinical professionals considered that you may be a significant danger to yourself or others around you. In these circumstances, you would be informed when this happens.



Legal



Older People



Emotions



Money



Work



Relationships



Health



Addictions



Family



## How to get Support

### Making Contact:

You and any family member (living at your address and aged over 16) can contact the Employee Assistance Helpline 24-hours a day, 365 days a year. We'll ask for the name of your employer and a convenient time for one of our counsellors or advisors to call you back.

Alternatively you can book an appointment online: [employeeassistance.org.uk](http://employeeassistance.org.uk)

### Emotional Support:

If you would like the support of a counsellor, we will arrange a telephone counselling session at a time to suit you. Our counsellor may recommend further counselling sessions to help you overcome a more troubling issue.

### Practical Advice:

If you need professional advice or factual information on any legal, money, health, work or personal issue, we can arrange for a free telephone consultation with one of our many specialist advisors.

24/7 freephone:

**0800 328 1437**

From outside the UK: +44 (0) 1482 661 814  
Minicom: 01482 661 911 (8.30 am – 6.00pm)

Online:

**[employeeassistance.org.uk](http://employeeassistance.org.uk)**