



Southfield School

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Dear Parent/Carer

You have probably seen the news that the government has announced some new measures to deal with COVID-19 and also a change to its overall response, moving from the 'contain' to the 'delay' phase of its plan. As before, the advice remains that effective hand hygiene and using a tissue when coughing or sneezing are some of the most effective ways in which we can help reduce the spread of the virus. The school is continuing to do all that it can to minimise the spread with good hygiene and is following all the advice from Public Health and Herts County Council and as such we believe there is no additional risk to students and staff.

**Self-isolation and staying at home** As you know the government has widened their advice on who should self-isolate to include those that have coronavirus like symptoms - a new or continuous cough or a high temperature, however mild - should stay at home for at least 7 days to protect others and help slow the spread of the disease. All our staff will be expected to follow this advice, and we ask you to ensure that your children do so too. We have a member of staff currently experiencing flu like symptoms who is following government guidance to self-isolate, we do not have any confirmed cases of the virus, or any known close contact with anyone who has a diagnosis of COVID-19.

Please could you make sure we have up to date emergency contact details for you, so that we can contact you, a friend or relative as needed. We may need to ask you to collect your child from school at short notice if they develop a high temperature or cough during the school day. This is so that we can ensure that children who may have the virus can be sent home as quickly as possible to minimise the potential risk to other pupils and staff. Please make sure that you have made arrangements for this possibility.

If your children are absent from school because they are ill, call the school on the first day of absence on 01707 276504. Please call the school by 7.30 a.m. and leave a message on the school answerphone, giving the reason for the absence. This is a departure from our normal procedures. The new self-isolation advice means that we may experience higher than normal levels of staff absence, which may impact on our ability to keep all areas of the school open. Receiving absence messages early each day will enable us to have a clear idea about staffing ratios in school.

If you receive confirmation that your child or another member of the family has COVID-19 please let us know, as this may change the advice that we give to pupils or staff with existing health conditions.

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In certain circumstances you may be advised by medical professionals to keep your child at home even if they are not unwell. If this is the case please let us know and we will support your decision. I understand that parents are concerned about the risk of their children catching Coronavirus and that some may wish to keep children at home even though they have not had any medical advice to do so. However, we cannot agree to a child's absence for that reason alone. All children who are well enough to come to school are expected to continue attending as normal unless advised otherwise by Public Health England.

**School Trips** The government advice is that school trips within the UK can at present go ahead safely. As the COVID-19 situation in the UK is changing rapidly we will review the risk assessment for each trip before it goes ahead.

**The possibility of school closure** Some parents have asked whether we could choose to close the school now. If we are ordered to close the school by Public Health England, because there is a risk to children/students and staff we will do. If the government make a decision to close all schools we will do so, otherwise our intention is to stay open and operate as normal. The Government has made it clear it expects schools to remain open unless public health advice has been given to close. This is based on the clear advice from the Chief Scientific Adviser to the Government, Sir Patrick Vallance, on how best to manage this epidemic. We are sure that you will be supportive of this.

We are however preparing in case the school closes and we are looking at ways for managing a remote curriculum, we will update you about these arrangements as soon as possible. We recognise that if closure is necessary this will have significant implications for many of our families with issues ranging from the loss of free school meals to problems for families finding suitable childcare. Please make sure that you have registered with the Everbridge closure notification system. This will enable us to keep you informed of any school closures. (Instructions for this are attached).

**Medication** If your child regularly takes medication in school, please make sure that we have a good supply and that it is in date. When sending prescribed medication in to school please make sure it has a pharmacy label on the box.

**Keeping informed** Obviously, we will continue to provide updates as the situation continues to develop and would ask that you inform the school of any contact your family may have had with a person with symptoms or who has tested positive.

Thank you for your continued support.

Libby Duggan  
Headteacher



## In case of unexpected school closure

Southfield is registered with the Everbridge Schools Closure Notification System. The system is intended to notify parents/carers and staff if the school closes in an emergency (e.g. bad weather). If you choose to sign up to the new system (which is free of charge) you will receive notifications via SMS or email of any closures.

To sign up to the Notification System you will need to go online to:

**[member.everbridge.net/index/892807736725489](https://member.everbridge.net/index/892807736725489)**

This link will take you to the "sign up" page where you should click on the "sign up" button located at the top right hand side of the page on the grey strip and from there follow the instructions. It should take no more than 5 minutes to register and you can edit your information at any time should you change your mobile number or email address. Each contact within the system can have 2 devices added so you can add the mobile and email address of a partner, spouse or grandparent on the same registration. They too would then receive any messages in relation to the school's closure.

If you have children at more than one school you can register for those schools too in a single registration process by selecting all schools you have children at. Once you have signed up and the system you will receive messages relating to the status of your chosen schools.

You can de-register from the system at any point by logging in to the system or by texting stop in response to any messages you receive.

Should you have any problems please contact the school office.