



13 March 2020

Dear parents, carers and members of St Gabriel's community,

### **Coronavirus COVID-19**

I am sure many of you are well aware of the challenge to public health that COVID-19 is presenting to the global community. Yesterday, the Government issued further advice to us all on how to respond as we seek to delay the spread of the virus. The aims are to protect life and health and to minimise social and economic disruption as far as possible. In this regard, I am writing to let you know how we as a school must play our part, to keep you up-to-date with further specific advice and our plans for the foreseeable future.

We are taking steps in school to plan as best we can for future events and as always appreciate your support and understanding.

### ***Raising Awareness and Mental Health & Wellbeing***

All pupils have been made aware that a virus is spreading. They know they have a part to play in maintaining good hygiene, however we do not want to cause alarm, worry or undue stress for them. Together we should:

- Do our best not to sensationalise or overdramatise this issue
- Offer reassurance around their own health – lots of children are asymptomatic or have very mild symptoms
- Stick to known facts
- Not pass our own concerns or stresses to our children
- Demonstrate understanding and empathy for those directly affected.

### ***Hygiene***

Pupils have been encouraged to wash their hands regularly and thoroughly. They have been shown how to catch a cough, or sneeze in a tissue or the crook of their arm, to bin tissues

and to wash hands afterwards. We ensure surfaces in the school; tables; doors and door handles; toilets; taps and sinks are clean and disinfected daily.

### ***Delay***

Even with good hygiene practice, it is inevitable cases of infection will rise. The Government are aiming to delay the peak of infection as long as possible.

### ***School remains open***

As you will probably be aware, schools in many countries around the world are closing due to the virus. In yesterday's announcement, the Government decided not to take this step *at this time* but indicated that this could be likely in the future. They indicated we are on a curve about four weeks behind some other countries like Italy and that they want to take measures *at the appropriate time*. I think therefore it is prudent to be ready for this measure should it be necessary in the coming weeks but until such time, **the school will continue with business as usual**. The school will remain open, activities will carry on and we will expect full-time attendance from all pupils and staff unless they fall within the category for self-isolation.

### ***Self-Isolation***

As of yesterday, anyone with a "new, continuous" cough or high temperature (37.8C/100F) is advised to self-isolate (stay at home) for seven days. Public Health England **has released new guidance** for those staying at home because they have symptoms of the virus. If **pupils** display these symptoms, please let us know in the usual way (ringing the school office on the first day of absence) and keep them at home for seven days. **At this time, pupils do not need to stay at home if a member of their family is displaying symptoms but they are not. These absences will be recorded as unauthorised on your child's record.**

### ***Staff Absence***

It is possible that for a period of time, a number of staff may be absent due to self-isolation. We will provide cover as best we can but we must always ensure that we have a **sufficient number of staff to operate safely**. If there are more absences than the school can cope with to fulfil its activities safely then the school will close.

### ***School Closure***

Should a school closure be necessary, we will notify you via email and text and a message will be put on the school website. It is in our contingency plan that, if the school closes, children should continue to **learn at home** and staff will work **remotely**. In the first instance, children will be encouraged to make extra use of our online learning platforms and reading at home. Teachers will be in touch with further work via email throughout a period of closure. The school will be contactable via email at [office@stgabrielscofeacademy.org](mailto:office@stgabrielscofeacademy.org). Please make sure we have your up to date email address and mobile numbers to ensure vital messages and work can be sent through effectively. We will keep you updated via these communication channels throughout a period of closure.

### ***School Events***

All upcoming school events are going ahead as planned. We are in close communication with providers, should this need to change we will let you know.

- 25<sup>th</sup> March - 26<sup>th</sup> March - Parent meetings
- 26<sup>th</sup> March - Braille Class, Easter Experience, St. John's Church
- 27<sup>th</sup> March - Reception/Year 1 trip to Warwick Castle
- 03<sup>rd</sup> April - 10.15 End of Term Celebration Assembly

### **Further Advice for Parents**

This is a fast moving situation. For parents wishing to keep up-to-date with the latest situation, the following links may be helpful:

- [www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public)
- The Government Coronavirus Action Plan; a guide to what you can expect across the UK - [www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-action-plan](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-action-plan)
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19>

Phone: 0800 046 8687

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

Email: [DfE.coronavirushelpline@education.gov.uk](mailto:DfE.coronavirushelpline@education.gov.uk)

Finally, this is clearly a difficult and unprecedented situation for us all. We hope that there is minimal disruption but it is looking inevitable that we will all be affected in some way by this. We pray for the health and protection of people around the world. With grateful thanks for your continued support and understanding,

Yours sincerely



Mr. A. Taylor  
Headteacher

