

**Headteacher: Mr D Childs**

Monday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Dear Parents

Re: Coronavirus

There are obviously many questions and concerns about the coronavirus and the potential impact that it could have on schools, and therefore you and your children. All schools receive daily updates from the Department for Education who provide guidance of how to act in the current situation.

Based on the information we have at this time, and following the Prime Minister's address last week, schools are to stay open. We are following this guidance, and will continue to do so, either until we are told otherwise by a local or national directive, or because advice about our specific school suggests that this is the best course of action. We continue to encourage and support handwashing regularly throughout the day. Following the address last week, please note the current Government advice is all people with flu-like symptoms - a fever above 37.8°C or a persistent new cough - should self-isolate/stay at home (away from other people) for seven days. If your child is absent for any reason, when you are contacting the school to inform us, please be specific with your reasons so we can record the absence accurately.

We will ensure that any communication will come directly from the school about any updates that affect you and our ability to stay open. In times such as these, especially in the age of social media, there are likely to be lots of rumours and 'fake news' that find their way to you. Please ignore these and only follow actions based on formal communication from the school. In the event of school closures, we will inform you via parent mail and the school website.

We will stay open for as long as we are allowed to do so. We are looking at making responsible decisions while we are open to minimise any risks. As such, we are sorry to say that we have had to postpone the Year 4 production, Easter Service, Dolphin Stay and Play and the Excellence Award Assembly for term 4.

Once normal service is resumed, we will look at rescheduling these events. We have also decided to cancel assemblies to reduce the number of people in an enclosed space at any one time, with our whole school assembly on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> March being the last one for the term. These decisions are not taken lightly, but we have had to take action to protect both children and staff.

We know that closing would add additional pressures at home. We also know that it would be impossible for us to continue to deliver the curriculum in a way that is useful or productive for your child. It would not be fair for us to expect you to take on the teaching of the children, nor is it possible to teach the children remotely (an idea we have thoroughly considered!).

If we do need to close, the one thing that we really need you to do is keep reading to and with your child. Evidence suggests that children who read for enjoyment every day not only perform better in reading tests than those who don't, but also develop a broader vocabulary, increased general knowledge and a better understanding of other cultures. Being read to allows you to choose content that is slightly above the ability that the child could read and understand themselves. This feeds the knowledge and language rich culture that can be developed through reading. It is also important to read as widely as you can. Read a range of books, from fiction, to

non-fiction and newspapers to comics. There is access to a free e-book library at <https://www.oxfordowl.co.uk/for-home/find-a-book/library-page/>. This is suitable for all ages and stages of reading development.

In the event of a closure, we will also be preparing a pack of work for your child. The work that is included in the pack is a mix of mainly maths and English work which the children have accessed this year and, in particular, this term. They should be able to work on it independently, but we would encourage you to support them where appropriate. In addition to this, we will be sending out reminders of the login details to some of our learning platforms, such as Purple Mash (which is an excellent online platform for many areas of learning), TT Rockstars (a fun and interactive way to practise your times tables) and Numbots (similar to TT Rockstars but for number bonds). There will also be some other activities that your children could do, linked to other areas of their learning. These may be story writing tasks, fact files, research or even some more 'crafty' activities.

We would encourage you to complete as much of this work as you can manage. Everything in the pack will serve a purpose of supporting the children in practising the work that they have done, and therefore help them to deepen their memory of it. Studies have shown that retrieving and practising previously taught material can have significant impact on long term memory. We know that these times are particularly uncertain, and that the landscape is changing very quickly. The school community will continue to work as normal and provide the best possible education for our children. We will also continue to work on further contingency plans and keep you updated as and when there are changes.  
Thank you for all of your support in these challenging times.

Daniel Childs and the team at Ryarsh