

Dear Parent/Carer,

COVID-19 Updates – March 19th

I need to again emphasise that as far as we are aware, we have had no confirmed cases within the school community. However, we already have a significant number of students and staff who are self-isolating and this is increasing daily and putting a strain on our ability to maintain a working school environment.

After the recent update by the Government last night we are still seeking clarity on the current position for special schools and key workers as the announcement presented more questions than answers for us. All special schools in Kent are currently working together and have similar issues regarding staffing and student absence, however, at present, **the school will still be open from Monday 23rd March.**

We are currently reviewing staffing and student absence on a daily basis to assess which classes we may be able to open or have to close. **Please can you inform the school office if you are thinking about sending your child back to school at any time, as this could have a significant impact on the school remaining operational and providing the right levels of staffing ratios. We will continue to monitor the 7-14 day isolation periods that both staff and students should be following.**

We now have a number of staff who fall within the 'vulnerable' category and will therefore be absent from school for 12 weeks causing further challenges and potentially long-term class closures. The advice and guidance we are receiving is changing daily, but I'm sure you will understand that moving staff and students around the building into unfamiliar rooms, with unfamiliar staff is not always an easy option.

Further to this we are reliant on outside contractors for cleaning and cooking and this could further impact on the school's ability to function. We are currently having only one school lunch sitting due to student numbers and catering staffing levels.

We would continue to recommend and encourage that those students with the most vulnerable conditions continue to socially distance for the advised 12 week period.

As a parent/carers of a child in the school please continue to make an individual risk assessment for your child and to then decide whether you would like to send them into school. We have been working closely with the LA and other special school settings and would ask you to consider the following underlying conditions when completing a risk assessment:

- Asthma or any respiratory needs.
- Low immune system.
- Neuro developmental conditions (epilepsy) that may result in respiratory complications.
- Heart disease/conditions.
- Diabetes.

We have made this decision based on the guidance regarding vulnerable groups and social distancing.

As of Friday 20th March, the following classes will continue to be closed as a result of staff absence, and remain closed until after the Easter break;

- **Nursery**
- **Knole**
- **Puffin**
- **Wakehurst**
- **Hummingbird**
- **Kingfisher**

Other classes will remain open but may be combined with other class groups. There will be no swimming or hydrotherapy from today and we will continue to review the situation on a daily basis.

Thank you in advance for your support.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Scott Jarred', is written over a light blue rectangular background.

Scott Jarred

Headteacher

