

Friday 6th March 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Re: Coronavirus (COVID-19)

I am writing to inform you that our school is following the advice from both the Director of Public Health (DPH) at the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham and Public Health England (PHE) regarding what precautions need to be taken in respect of COVID-19.

[The following is the advice from the DPH regarding **Frequently Asked Questions** from parents and includes advice about travel – both school trips and advice for parents who may be travelling over Easter, which I hope you will find useful.](#)

1. Are facemasks beneficial to protect against the infection?

Answer: Section 3 of the guidance (*Preventing spread of infection*) below clearly states: Face masks for the general public, pupils or students, or staff are not recommended to protect from infection, as there is no evidence of any benefit from their use outside healthcare environments.

See Link below to the latest guidance on face masks:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19>

(**Please note:** If children do wear a facemask at school, this may cause more anxiety, not only for the whole school but also for the individuals concerned who could possibly be targeted as a potential case).

2. School trips into London - Is it safe for children to travel on public transport?

Answer: At the moment there are no restrictions on movements in London for the general public. Therefore, there is no reason for children not to travel on school trips including using public transport.

3. If parents do not send their children to school, what is the school policy?

Answer: The policy on 'Absence from school' would apply. If there is a valid reason for parents/carers not to send their children to school after having read all the guidance, the final decision will rest with the school in consultation with the Local Authority as to whether the leave will be classified as authorised or unauthorised. The schools will speak to parents/carers in the first instance to find out the reasons for absence.

4. What's the advice for schools and parents in relation to those pupils returning from school trips from high risk/lockdown areas such as Northern Italy?

Answer: A number of local schools organised skiing trips including to Northern Italy during the half-term. These schools have followed the PHE guidance.

Please Note: the school trips to Northern Italy were NOT in a lockdown area. therefore, people travelling from affected areas did NOT need to undertake any special measures. They were advised to contact NHS111 in case they had any symptoms and were asked to follow NHS advice.

5. Planned trips abroad during Easter – should we cancel?

Answer: For any travel advice, please refer to the NHS Choices website below

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

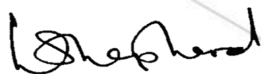
Finally, the key message to protect yourself and your family from this virus, which is to wash your hands more often than usual, for 20 seconds each time with soap and water or hand sanitiser, especially when you:

- get home or into work/school
- blow your nose, sneeze or cough
- eat or handle food

It's simple advice but it's the single most important thing we can do.

I would also like to reassure you that we ensure the children and staff follow this advice during the school day.

Yours faithfully



Mrs L Shepherd
Headteacher