



7 May 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

**Re: Update 7 May 2020 Covid-19**

I am writing to give you an update on several matters I have raised in my previous letters and to let you know our arrangements going forwards which, will of course depend upon any announcement made on Sunday 10 May 2020, by the Government. Below is a copy of recent guidance and extracts from the guidance from the Department for Education (DfE). The reason for including the links and the quotes is to give some context to the potential impact on re-opening to a greater number of pupils than we have at present.

**Guidance on remote education:**

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/remote-education-practice-for-schools-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

**“Handwashing advice**

It is essential that everyone washes their hands more often, using soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Hand washing with soap employs mechanical action that loosens bacteria and viruses from the skin, rinsing them into the drain. Drying hands afterwards makes the skin less hospitable to the virus. Hand sanitiser can be effective if soap is not available or the situation makes using soap less feasible (i.e. when outside) but using hand sanitiser provides none of the virus-destroying friction that rubbing your hands together and rinsing with water provides.”

Centralised advice and guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-schools-and-other-educational-settings>

Over the last seven weeks since enforced closure of schools, there has been very little change to the advice and guidance and no change to that which I quoted in my letter of 21 April 2020:

“To help ensure that the risk of virus spread for both staff and children is as low as possible, education and childcare settings that remain open should:

- tell children, parents, carers or any visitors, such as suppliers, not to enter the education or childcare setting if they are displaying any symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19)
- consider how children arrive at the education or childcare setting, and reduce any unnecessary travel on coaches, buses or public transport
- ensure class sizes reflect the numbers of teaching staff available and are kept as small as possible
- stagger lunch times, break times, and the movement of pupils around the school, to reduce large groups of children gathering
- discourage parents from gathering at school gates
- try to follow the [social distancing guidelines](#)”

Our priority is always to educate your child ensuring their safety. As in all cases we have been presented with over the years I have been headteacher, we will find an effective solution to the problems we are faced with – whether it be part-time timetables or staggered timetables or some other format that works for the best interests of all. The Covid-19 crisis has placed us all into a situation that is unprecedented. We all want to return to a sense of normality, but this may not be for some

time. I have been working with our Business Operations Manager looking at the capacity across the school in terms of available space; I have also been working with our HR Manager to look at available staffing. Following the announcement on Sunday I will be arranging to meet with members of my Senior Leadership Team to plan the most effective way we can re-open the school to either part-year groups or priority groups. Whilst in the period of enforced closure, large areas of the school have been thoroughly cleaned and remained closed off to access by members of staff to ensure the cleaning is not compromised before any return of pupils. Whilst we have remained open over the last seven weeks, we have had to have access to the Sports Hall, Gym, Achievement Support Area, the Computing, Business and Media faculty and Café Beans. We are sourcing hand sanitisers but as the Government advice states, hand washing with soap and water is the most effective method of cleaning.

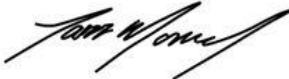
1. There is a great deal of speculation in the national media regarding a re-opening of schools pending the announcement intended for Sunday. In my letters of 21 April 2020 and 30 April 2020 I shared with you some of the points I feel will need to be considered by us to ensure we comply with Government advice and guidance which, it has always been stated is based on the "best scientific advice" they have. We have significantly reduced numbers of pupils in school at present and we are managing, through constant reminders to ensure they maintain distance between them but as they move around the classroom and along corridors it becomes a distance of less than two metres for short periods of time. After each activity in school all pupils and each member of staff wash their hands using soap and water which over the course of the day takes up a notable period. There are many points that need to be considered and the following is not an exhaustive list but is an indication of points I am having to consider ensuring we can maintain working within the current guidelines:
  - a. The way pupils travel to school will be important especially if they use public transport. Could there be restrictions on train station platforms which will impact on the numbers of pupils able to get on a train at any one time? Will there be limits on the numbers of passengers on buses and how will queues at bus stops be managed? When pupils get off the bus and train will they automatically self-enforce social distancing or is it likely they will form groups to socialise? If pupils arrive by car and parents drop them off in the car park will they walk into school maintaining social distancing? Finally, pupils who usually walk to school are more likely to meet other children who they know (most likely their friends) also walking to school
  - b. When pupils arrive in school it is likely to be an expectation that they all wash their hands with soap and water for twenty seconds. If we are to have a class of thirty pupils in school, then this will take at least ten minutes if they only have access to one sink supervised by a member of staff. Of course, we have many sinks in school, but they are located across the whole of the building; each faculty area has three sinks each; the main toilet blocks have fountain style sinks, but we would not allow many pupils in this area at once
  - c. I have previously outlined the impact on queuing and classrooms and the available space in school if two-metre social-distancing remains in place. If social distancing for children in schools is reduced (although this is speculation on my part) then there will still be logistical problems and not allow for full classes. Although we are a large building and normally, we have over one thousand four hundred pupils in school this allows for them to be shoulder to shoulder when walking along corridors and to sit in groups at break and lunch times talking to friends for lengthy periods of time
  - d. We also have to consider what if a pupil in a classroom has a cough; it may well be that they have hay fever or a cold or a virus, not necessarily Covid-19. In a much earlier letter I did explain how we brought pupils to a centralised location in case they developed a persistent cough – all parents who we contacted asked that their child was either collected or allowed to leave to go home whether they had a persistent cough or not
  - e. How do we protect members of staff as well as pupils? There is speculation that masks or face coverings be worn on public transport. My understanding is that when the mask is removed from the face, the fact hands, whether wearing gloves or not will compromise further wearing of the mask as germs can be transferred from hands to the mask. I cannot foresee teachers wearing masks in the classroom and still be able to teach effectively

- f. There will be many parents/carers who will be concerned about their child returning to school unless there is clear scientific evidence to suggest it is alright to do so. We too will have members of staff who will be concerned about returning to work without an assurance that they will be protected from a possible spread of the virus. Several members of staff are within the shielding groups already identified by the Government and unless the announcement on Sunday states that these groups no longer need to be shielded, we will not have enough members of staff to fully open the school
  
2. I have written previously regarding how we are working with you and your children to educate remotely. The link on the first page of this letter provides the latest advice and guidance from the DfE. Following the announcement on Sunday I will write again regarding how we intend to work with you on a transition plan and how we will maintain work on Teams
  
3. The access to IT devices although published has not yet been put in place to support Local Authorities to access their entitlement. As a Local Authority school, we await notification of our allocation and how they are to be distributed. The following link is to the organisation commissioned to deliver digital learning, but not the providers of the equipment: <https://covid19.thekeyssupport.com/news/digital-education-platform-scheme/?marker=content-body>
  
4. I did write previously that we recruited a new SENDCO, unfortunately due to a personal reason, they have withdrawn from the post and we are currently undertaking a second recruitment process. I want to assure parents/carers that we have the long-standing expertise in school to effectively deliver SEND provision until we can recruit the right candidate for our school
  
5. The number of Safeguarding cases remains low and as previously, if parents/carers have any safeguarding concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us on [enquiries@titussaltschool.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@titussaltschool.co.uk) and one of our Designated Safeguarding Leads will be able to deal with the case.

As I have previously written, if any parent/carer has any concerns and who does not already have a contact with someone in school, please contact the school on: [enquiries@titussaltschool.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@titussaltschool.co.uk)

As I receive any further information, I will keep you updated. Once again, many thanks for your continued support and who knows we may be entering a new phase of transition to re-opening schools from next week

Yours sincerely



Ian Morrel  
Headteacher