



Wednesday 18th March 2020

Dear parents

RE Coronavirus / COVID19 update for parents (Laxey / Dhoon School Federation)

I wanted to take this opportunity to update you on a number of matters relating to coronavirus and COVID19. You will no doubt be aware that a "State of Emergency" has now been declared in the Isle of Man and will have heard the announcements made by the Chief Minister and the Isle of Man Government over the past 48 hours. **At this stage the Government will not be placing any restriction on public gatherings and schools will remain open.**

I did however want to keep you informed about what we are doing in Laxey School and Dhoon School in view of the current situation:

- I have been chairing meetings of the Federation Management Team to review our School Continuity Plan which details our contingency preparations for a number of potential scenarios. A detailed risk assessment has been compiled and will be reviewed each day in light of further Isle of Man Government advice.
- Staff will attend regular briefings and will be kept up to date with developments and will respond accordingly.
- Written updates for parents will be as regular as possible, and important information will be posted via our social media channels as soon as we have it. Please pass on information from our social media pages to your friends who do not have access to Facebook and Twitter.
- Swimming lessons have been cancelled for the remainder of this academic year.
- All school trips within the Isle of Man are cancelled with immediate effect and until further notice.
- Non-essential external visitors to the school have also been cancelled with immediate effect and until further notice.
- Plans for off-island day trips – in the pipe line for June/July – will not be progressed this academic year.

An announcement about the Y6 off-island trip to Shropshire will be made under separate cover – expect this imminently.

For the benefit of all, we are constantly reminding members of the school community to wash their hands properly and throughout the day. To further minimise risk I have introduced the following measures in school with immediate effect:

- All children will be directed by the teacher to wash their hands in hot water and soap upon entry to the building, including first thing in the morning.
- School assemblies – where over 100 people gather in the hall and sit just centimetre apart – are cancelled with immediate effect and until further notice.
- Staff will manage lunchtime arrangements to minimise risk as much as possible.

Finally, this is what we all need to do to keep our community safe and the school running smoothly:

- I urgently request that families **only contact school to report an absence or for urgent matters**. Please keep messages concise as we anticipate the number of calls/emails to rise over the coming days. Any non-essential contact should be avoided as it unnecessarily slows down processes at this uncertain time.
- Stay at home for 14 days if you have either (i) a high temperature (ii) a new continuous cough. This will help protect others in your community while you are infectious. Keep your child off if they display either of these symptoms.
- The staff will be vigilant of pupils displaying these symptoms and we will contact parents to take their children home for isolation if they are seen to have them.
- No penalty will be imposed on parents who decide to keep their children off school for health reasons.
- If you don't yet follow our Facebook Pages and Twitter feeds, now is the time to consider doing so. We can be found at @DhoonSchool and @LaxeySchool on both Facebook and Twitter.

We are currently working on a day to day basis, making adjustments as we receive official updates and advice. I am also assessing the situation continually and responding, with my staff teams in both schools, as best I can. I would like to reassure parents that all staff in both schools are working *incredibly* hard to ensure the Federation is able to run as smoothly and safely as possible. I would like to thank them for all their hard work.

Finally, I would like to reiterate that there are currently **no** confirmed cases of pupils or staff with COVID-19 in our schools the time of writing. I would like to thank families who have taken the time to show their support and kindness to our staff since Monday. We really appreciate your understanding and patience during such a challenging time!



Max Kelly
Executive Headteacher