

Clifford Holroyde Specialist SEN College



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Headteacher: Mrs J Pepa BA Hons, QTS, SENCO

JP/DM

18 March 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

I would like to thank you for your excellent communication and support regarding Monday night's Government announcement of the move to a 14-day household quarantine.

This has had a very significant impact on school today resulting in 10 members of staff unable to attend either through their own illness or in response to the new requirements. This includes some of our senior staff. As a result, yesterday the SLT took the decision to combine classes. Whilst some of the boys have been very cooperative, this is not a sustainable response especially with an increase in staff absences. We are unable to bring in supply teachers for a number of different reasons.

Pupil attendance has been lower than usual and over the past 2 days some pupils have had to be sent home during the day, either due to family members showing symptoms or showing mild symptoms themselves. My staff have been incredibly supportive and have been calm and professional in dealing with sick students whilst ensuring all recommended guidance is followed regarding the procedures for this which are extremely challenging in any school setting. (follow this link to see for yourselves <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19#what-to-do-if-someone-develops-symptoms-of-coronavirus-covid-19-on-site>)

You will see at the bottom of that guidance that the advice is that schools may need to consider closure for 'operational issues' caused by staff absence which is the case at Clifford Holroyde.

I am reasonably anticipating that staff absence will increase again tomorrow as staff's own children and family members are becoming ill and the need for 14-day household quarantine.

Whilst I appreciate that the Government is expecting schools to stay open for as long as possible, unfortunately and reluctantly the Chair of Governors and I have made the decision to close the school until further notice as we are not able to open with sufficient staff to guarantee pupil safety.

I am very sorry that we have had to make this decision. We are currently liaising with the local authority regarding the ongoing situation and I will endeavour to keep you updated.



I realise that this may impact on families but would like to emphasise that this is a last resort.

During this difficult time my staff and I will continue our daily phone calls and support through Sam Learning, our online platform. We will be delivering packs to each family to support with home education and please keep an eye on our Facebook page for family THRIVE activities to do at home. I believe that parents have a duty to ensure that students are not in a public place during school hours and that they are disciplined in trying to follow their school timetabled subjects with the work that has been set. Students can use their daily phone calls to get support from Form Tutors each day and I know staff will attempt to check their school phones during school hours as long as they are well and not caring for family members.

I will continue to provide emails and website updates as frequently as possible but please bear with us as we continually develop our system of how to deal with queries.

Thank you for all your support which has been tremendous.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Jane Pepa
Headteacher