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## Abbey Primary School - Ysgol Gynradd Abbey

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### Updated Information

Dear Parents, Carers,

18<sup>th</sup> March 2020

I am writing with some information about coronavirus and how it may affect the school over the next few weeks or months. I am hoping that some of the information below will help to put your minds at rest and answer many questions being asked of us on a daily basis.

#### Why is the school opening and how are we protecting children from the Coronavirus?

The school is following government and Public Health Wales advice. We are unable to make an independent decision to close and have to follow this advice. Fortunately, the virus seems to affect children far less than older people. However, we are ensuring the children wash their hands regularly and that they 'catch' coughs. We have limited all visitors to school.

#### Have you cancelled any events?

Yes, we have cancelled all non – essential events including assemblies, Easter events, school trips parent groups, PTA disco etc.

#### Can I keep my child home?

We understand this is a unique and very worrying time for parents, especially if you have relatives who are vulnerable. If you choose to keep your child home, the following applies:

- If your child has a general illness – they will receive an authorised absence
  - If your child is kept home and the school is informed of the reason why – they will receive an authorised absence
  - If your child is kept home and school is **NOT** informed why – they will receive an un-authorised absence
- This has been agreed with our local authority Education Welfare Officer and the Director of Education.

#### My child has a new dry cough and / or fever. Should I keep them home?

Yes, please keep them home for 14 days self-isolation. Remember to let the school know you are doing this.

#### **Public Health Wales advice:**

- *if you live alone and you have symptoms of coronavirus illness (COVID-19), however mild, stay at home for **7 days** from when your symptoms started.*
- *if you live with others and you or one of them have symptoms of coronavirus, then all household members must stay at home and not leave the house for **14 days**. The 14-day period starts from the day when the first person in the house became ill*
- *it is likely that people living within a household will infect each other or be infected already. Staying at home for 14 days will greatly reduce the overall amount of infection the household could pass on to others in the community*
- *for anyone in the household who starts displaying symptoms, they need to stay at home for 7 days from when the symptoms appeared, regardless of what day they are on in the original 14 day isolation period.*

#### If school closes, will you provide work for the children?

Yes, preparations for this are underway at the moment. It will be challenging, especially for younger children but my dedicated staff are making every effort to ensure that, in the eventuality of school closing we will provide you with as much work as possible to do at home. Further suggestions – play board games, cook or make something delicious, enjoy reading comics or books – for at least 20 minutes per day,

practise basic maths – learn to count in 2s, 5s, 10s etc., understand the value of money, (infants) for older children learn your tables, help with general household tasks, make sure your child spends time outside but in your own garden.

Don't forget you can upload any photos or work completed to your child's class Seesaw account using their individual QR codes and these will be issued with a 'how to sheet' if the decision is made to close the school.

Online free resources for infant and junior children can be found at [www.twinkl.co.uk/offer](http://www.twinkl.co.uk/offer) password/code is UKTWINKLHELPS.

#### Will you provide me with work if I choose to keep my child home?

Unfortunately, this is not possible. Those who know how teaching works will know it takes many hours to plan work for classes and teaching now does not rely on just worksheets or textbooks, which could be easily shared. To ask staff to continue to plan work for the children in school and to provide work for those being kept home would be too much. However, in the event of a school closure staff will provide education activity packs for the children who are in school on that day. If your child is not in school due to family self-isolation then the packs are not to be picked up from school (to prevent the spreading of germs).

#### How will you cover staff absence?

Whilst schools remain open we will make every effort to keep things as normal as possible for the children. However, if we do have staff absence it is likely to be very difficult to get supply cover. We have put together a Business Continuity Plan for these circumstances and actions we **MAY** have to take will include:

- Combining classes, especially if large numbers of pupils are absent
- Asking parents to provide packed lunches, if kitchen staff are unavailable
- Moving staff around to cover more vulnerable children
- Keeping children in school but doing less 'teacher intensive tasks'
- As a very LAST resort, shortening the school days or closing for some/all children. The Local Authority can only do this on a unilateral basis if there is significant lack of supervision or a health and safety issue in school e.g. no first Aiders, no cleaning service, and no senior members of staff in school.

I would like to appeal to everyone to continue to support us at this time. We find ourselves in a situation, which is worrying, unknown and has no precedent. We will make every attempt to keep in contact with parents/carers and keep you informed as soon as possible about any changes/news we receive. Please rest assured that the children's wellbeing remains our utmost priority.

Thank you

Bev Newman

NB – more specific advice for parents and carers can be found on the Public Health Wales website and I would encourage you to access this routinely.

[www.publichealthwales.wales.nhs.uk](http://www.publichealthwales.wales.nhs.uk)