



16 March 2020

**Dear Parent**

**At Monmouth Comprehensive School, we have been advised of the following information from Public Health Wales as well as other Government Organisations.**

### **Information about Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)**

A coronavirus is a type of virus. As a group, coronaviruses are common across the world. COVID-19 is a new strain of coronavirus first identified in Wuhan City, China in December 2019. The incubation period of COVID-19 is between 2 and 14 days. This means that if a person remains well 14 days after contact with someone with confirmed coronavirus, they have not been infected.

The following symptoms may develop in the 14 days after exposure to someone who has COVID-19 infection:

- cough;
- difficulty in breathing;
- and/or fever.

Generally, these infections can cause more severe symptoms in people with weakened immune systems, such as older people and/or those with long-term conditions like diabetes, cancer and chronic lung disease. There is no evidence that children are more affected than other age groups – very few cases have yet to have been reported in children.

### **How COVID-19 is spread**

From what we know about other coronaviruses, spread of COVID-19 is most likely to happen when there is close contact (within 2 metres) with an infected person. It is likely that the risk increases the longer someone has close contact with an infected person.

### **Prevention approaches that we have taken at MCS**

There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to the virus. There are general principles anyone can follow to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses, including:

- students/staff who feel unwell (or develop high temperature or a new cough) should stay at home for 7 days;
- the washing of your hands often - with liquid soap and water or use alcohol
- sanitiser, if handwashing facilities are not available. This is particularly important after taking public transport or covering your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throwing the tissue in a bin.



Students, staff and visitors should wash their hands

- 1) before leaving home;
- 2) on arrival at school;
- 3) after using the toilet;
- 4) after breaks and sporting activities;
- 5) before food preparation;
- 6) before eating any food, including snacks;
- 7) before leaving school.

- avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands;
- avoid close contact with people who are unwell;
- if you are worried about your symptoms, or those of a child or colleague, please use the [Coronavirus COVID-19 symptom checker on NHS Direct Wales](#). Do not go directly to your GP or other healthcare environment;
- see the latest information about Novel Coronavirus on the [Public Health Wales website](#).

### **Actions taken by the school to support the wellbeing of students and staff**

School leaders have been working to establish a continuity plan in response to the pandemic. This also includes planning for delivery of activities in the situation of a forced closure and planning for a return to 'usual practice' should a short-term and/or long-term closure take place.

Preventative measures have been introduced, including:

- using the guidance of the critical incident plan to arrange for all eventualities. The Senior Leaders meet daily to review latest communications from Public Health Wales and the Government;
- identifying members of the community (students and staff) with underlying medical conditions which place them in the 'at risk' group;
- raising awareness of the symptoms closely linked to COVID-19 and the precautionary measures through visual displays, as well as information given to students during Form period;
- provision of hand sanitiser at Reception for visitors and ensuring that liquid soap is available at all times;
- additional cleaning of the regularly touched surfaces throughout the school day i.e. door handles, hand rails etc;
- As of 16th March 2020, consideration will be given to all non-essential activities to either postpone or cancel i.e. sporting fixtures and visiting speakers.

### **In the event of a full/partial school closure (short-term and/or long-term)**

The school will only close when there is direct guidance/recommendation from appropriate authorities e.g. Public Health Wales and/or where there are insufficient numbers of staff available to safely deliver an education to students. In the event of a school closure, staff will not be able to access the school site. Therefore, in this situation the school will:

- provide students in all Year groups (with increased support for those students

preparing to sit public examinations in the summer) with online materials to facilitate distance learning. A PowerPoint will be available from today to all students and Parents explaining how to access all learning resources electronically on a range of devices. The guidance will be sent out via MILK as well as placed on the school website – click [HERE](#) for direct link;

- communicate with families/students on a regular basis to provide updates on recovery phase i.e. safe return to normal school life.

Upon return to 'normal practices' the school will:

- undertake a learning audit for examination classes to identify skills-gaps in readiness for the summer series;
- communicate with relevant awarding bodies to make them aware of any requirements for special considerations;
- respond to any ongoing support required for students and/or staff. This may include counselling services.

## **Communication**

Throughout the UK Government response phases to Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) the school will work closely with relevant authorities to make decisions which are in the interests of all members of the community. However, to support the safety, wellbeing and continued learning of students, the school asks that all families:

- follow the school Twitter feed [@LearnwithMCS](#) to be able to access relevant information in the eventuality of a partial/full closure;
- ensure that the school has the correct email address in order to maintain communication throughout the process. The school will use SIMS InTouch;
- log in to the school website daily and check information on the front page of the website - [www.monmouthcomprehensive.org.uk](http://www.monmouthcomprehensive.org.uk)
- talk to child(ren) about hygiene practices and make use of relevant sites to reduce anxiety.

## **Useful Information**

[UK Government \(COVID-19\)](#)  
[Welsh Government \(COVID-19\)](#)  
[Public Health Wales](#)

Yours sincerely

**R V Davies**  
**Headteacher**