



Hanley and Upton Educational Trust

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Chief Executive Officer: Mrs Lindsey Cooke

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Dear Parent / Carer

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

I know that you will all have been following the news about the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak closely, and will have seen the change in Government strategy announced by the Prime Minister yesterday.

All HUET schools, including Hanley Castle, have been following carefully the advice and guidance provided by the Department for Education (DfE) and Public Health England (PHE) in order to play our part in slowing the spread of the virus and being prepared as the situation develops.

This advice and guidance is updated on a daily basis and gives us very clear guidelines about how to handle the various aspects of the situation:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19>

Presently, the government has decided to keep schools and colleges open. We fully understand the importance of this to allow key workers, particularly those in the National Health Service, to continue working. However, this decision could be reversed at any time because there is an obvious contradiction in the advice to avoid mass gatherings and concentrating children and young people in school environments.

However, there may be other circumstances where HUET schools cannot remain open. Staff attendance cannot be guaranteed. A significant number of staff are following the new advice to self-isolate due to pregnancy, underlying health conditions, being in contact with suspected COVID-19 cases or being unwell. We are also aware of an increasing number of pupils who have become unwell.

We are aware that many of you have decided, or may be considering deciding, to keep your child at home for reasons of health and safety. This is, of course particularly important if your child or a member of your household has an underlying health condition.

Children who are unwell must not be sent to school. The advice now is that where a member of a household is unwell with a fever and / or a new continuous cough the whole household must self-isolate for 14 days.

Following an in-depth analysis of the staffing situation at Hanley Castle, we believe that we are able to safely continue to supervise a proportion of our students. We would like to prioritise children of those who work in front line services, particularly the NHS and the Emergency Services. Please bear this in mind when deciding whether to send your child into school. Having a manageable number of children in school may allow us to stay open longer.

If one or more HUET schools close we have been making plans to support children in continuing their learning from home. This is particularly important for Hanley Castle's Year 11 and Year 13 exam groups, although we remain committed to supporting the education of all of our pupils where possible. We will continue to work on finalising these plans during the next few days.

Arrangements for GCSE and A level exams remain uncertain. Students should work on the assumption that they will take place as planned, and continue to follow the specific advice they have been given by the school and teachers.

In the event of school closures, we will try to keep parents and pupils updated via websites, SIMS In Touch, e-mail, text, E-praise, Microsoft TEAMS and the other forms of electronic communication employed across the HUET.

We are, of course, encouraging all pupils and staff to continue to adopt simple measures which help prevent the spread of all respiratory viruses, including:

- Training and encouraging students to wash hands often - with soap and water, or use alcohol sanitiser if handwashing facilities are not available. This is particularly important after taking public transport, such as the school bus
- Covering coughs or sneezes with a tissue, then throwing the tissue in a bin. If you do not have a tissue use the crook of your elbow
- Pupils, students, staff and visitors should wash their hands:
 - before leaving home
 - on arrival at school
 - after using the toilet
 - after breaks and sporting activities
 - before food preparation
 - before eating any food, including snacks
 - before leaving school
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- Avoid close contact with people who are unwell
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces

If you are worried about any symptoms that you or a member of your family are showing, please call NHS 111. Do not go directly to your GP or other healthcare environment.

Just to confirm, following the Government announcement yesterday (16th March), the advice to schools has been updated as follows:

- **Schools will remain open at present.**
- **Any child or member of staff who has a fever or a new continuous cough must not attend school. They and their household must self-isolate for 14 days.**

- Similarly, where any member of a household is unwell with a fever and / or a new continuous cough the whole household must self-isolate for 14 days.
- If a child develops a fever or a new continuous cough in school we will contact parents / carers to collect them immediately.
- Children and staff who have underlying health conditions which render them vulnerable to Coronavirus should not come to school:
 - Anyone instructed to get a flu jab as an adult each year on medical grounds
 - Those with chronic (long-term) respiratory diseases, such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), emphysema or bronchitis
 - Those with chronic heart disease, such as heart failure
 - Those with chronic kidney disease
 - Those with chronic liver disease, such as hepatitis
 - Those with chronic neurological conditions, such as Parkinson's disease, motor neurone disease, multiple sclerosis (MS), a learning disability or cerebral palsy
 - Those with diabetes
 - Those with spleen problems - for example, sickle cell disease or if you have had your spleen removed
 - Those with a weakened immune system as the result of conditions such as HIV and AIDS, or medicines such as steroid tablets or chemotherapy
 - Those who are pregnant
 - Those who are seriously overweight (a BMI of 40 or above)

Please keep the school informed regarding any illness or advice to isolate by phoning or e-mailing us as quickly as possible.

All non-essential school events have been cancelled with effect from Wednesday 18th March, including parents evenings, trips and visits. A first and only performance of 'Made in Dagenham' will take place on Tuesday 17th March with an audience limited to invited family members of the cast and crew.

The DfE has launched a helpline for parents and school staff on 0800 046 8687, while the NHS provides additional advice via their Public Health England Blog or the NHS UK website.

I can reassure you that every Hanley Castle member of staff will continue to do their best, either in school or at home, to support our children and young people through the coming weeks. I continue to wish you and all your families the very best at this difficult time.

Yours sincerely



Lindsey Cooke
HUET CEO