



16th March 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

Re: Aurora Academies Trust's Response to the ongoing Covid-19 situation

Dear Parents and Carers

You will no doubt be keeping yourselves up-to-date with the UK Government's response to the current, fast-changing situation regarding the spread of Coronavirus Covid-19. I am writing to inform you about Aurora's plans to respond to this situation.

Firstly, the advice from both the Government and Public Health England (PHE) regarding school closures has not changed: schools should not consider closing (even if there are confirmed or suspected cases of Covid-19) unless they are instructed to do so by PHE.

However, as increasing numbers of the UK's population become ill or self-isolate, then it is quite clear that this will stretch resources in our schools and therefore we will be forced to consider some, or all, of the following:

- The implications of school staff having to be absent from work
- Reviewing classes in light of the above (e.g. putting classes together)
- Partial closures for certain year groups (it would be difficult to predict which classes as it would depend upon which staff were unavailable)
- Full closure of any of our schools should we not have sufficient human resources to maintain educational provision
- Whether the UK Government changes its current advice to schools and forces all schools to close
- In the event of any closures, how would schools maintain some form of education, and in what format?

As you will appreciate, none of us has a crystal ball and therefore it is impossible to define exactly what will happen in the future. All that does seem certain is that the national situation and response will continue to have a significant impact on Aurora and all schools nationally.

Therefore, please continue to follow the much-publicised advice given by the NHS and PHE, especially around the importance of good personal hygiene (e.g. washing hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and warm water) and following the mantra of *Catch it, Bin it, Kill it*

Should you or any family member show signs of having Covid-19 then please follow the advice given by NHS which may include self-isolating. Please rest assured that should you decide to self-isolate your child then they will be marked with a special code that will mean the absence is authorised. I do not want any parent to worry that such absences might lead to any follow up actions (e.g. fines).

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In the meantime I would ask that you work with us in terms of helping our schools to manage this unusual national situation. Our schools may well be stretched above and beyond their capacity to cope should staffing levels drop, as would appear will inevitably be the case. We will keep you informed of any changes, both via individual school communications and by Trust communications such as this. As a minimum I shall write to update you each week, although that frequency may increase should the national situation change any quicker.

For the moment we are taking every sensible precaution that we can in our schools. Cleaning of surfaces and door handles has been increased. I have instructed our Heads not to hold whole school assemblies and also not to plan any trips, other than local ones where the risk assessment suggests that it is safe to do so. Sadly, however, we will have to postpone this term's planned Paragon Events, however we feel at this time that Parents' Evenings can still go ahead in our Primary Schools, because the organisation of these does not bring large groups of parents together in one place. Trips to swimming pools are still able to happen because advice is that the chlorine levels in the pools do not allow for the spread of the virus. We will continue to keep such things under continual review of course.

We are very keen to see what you would want from us as a Trust at this time and most especially if there is anything we can do to support any of our parents who may work as front line health positions and/or in the emergency services. With that in mind we would be grateful if parents would complete a short *SurveyMonkey* questionnaire that will be sent out this week by your school office.

Thank you for your continued support for your child, the school and for Aurora. If we can keep working together then we can deal with the challenges of the next few weeks and months.

I shall continue to keep you updated

With my very best wishes

Yours faithfully

Tim McCarthy

CEO, Aurora Academies Trust

