

13/03/20

Dear Parent/Carer

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

I am writing to advise you that all Rhondda Cynon Taf schools are provided with regular updates in relation to Coronavirus (COVID-19) developments which are always informed by Welsh Government and Public Health Wales guidance.

As you will be aware Coronavirus is a type of virus. As a group, Coronaviruses are common across the world and COVID -19 is a new strain of Coronavirus first identified in Wuhan City, China in December 2019. The situation in relation to the virus continues to change on a daily basis. In summary, the current advice relating to travellers returning from overseas is broken down into two categories: :

1. Category 1 - travellers should immediately self-isolate, even if asymptomatic (no visible signs of illness), and call NHS Direct (Wales) to inform of any recent travel.
2. Category 2 - travellers do not need to undertake any special measures, but if they develop symptoms they should self-isolate and call NHS Direct (Wales).

In terms of the above categories, these relate to the following countries:

1. Category 1 - countries are currently; Wuhan city and Hubei province (China), Iran, Daegu or Cheongdo (Republic of Korea) and Italy*.
2. Category 2 - countries are currently; Cambodia, China, Hong Kong, Japan, Laos, Macau, Malaysia, Myanmar, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, Vietnam.

** Travelers who returned from areas of Northern Italy that were under containment measures (see map link below) **between 19 February and 8 March 2020** should self-isolate for 14 days. If they develop symptoms they should contact the NHS Direct Wales on 111.*

*Any Travelers who returned from the rest of Italy **before 9 March 2020** do not need to undertake any special measures, but if they develop symptoms they should self-isolate and call the NHS Direct Wales on 111.*

The following link will allow people to identify whether they are in category 1 or 2 more easily:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-specified-countries-and-areas/covid-19-specified-countries-and-areas-with-implications-for-returning-travellers-or-visitors-arriving-in-the-uk>



The incubation period of the virus is between 2 and 14 days. This means that if a person remains well 14 days after contact with someone with a confirmed Coronavirus, they have not been infected.

Travellers returning from other countries, including France, currently do not need take any special measures although people are encouraged to check the information on the Public Health Wales website as it is updated daily.

The government announced on the 12 March 2020 that all overseas education trips for children under the age of 18 should not take place until further notice. For further information, please check the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website as this specifically deals with travel advice and restrictions at <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/foreign-commonwealth-office>. In the event of a school trip being cancelled due to travel restrictions being imposed, further advice will be provided by the schools as and when appropriate.

What are the symptoms of Novel Coronavirus?

Symptoms are similar to other respiratory viruses such as the flu. These may include:

- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Fever.

Generally, these infections can cause more severe symptoms in people with weakened immune systems, older people and 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 and presently there have been very few cases reported in children.

In order to minimise risks to your child, please encourage good hygiene and frequent hand washing. Washing hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds is recommended. The use of an alcohol-based hand sanitiser that contains at least 60% alcohol is recommended if soap and water are not available.

It would also be helpful if you could encourage your child to

- avoid touching their eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands
- avoid close contact with people who are unwell
- cover any coughs or sneezes with a tissue, throw the tissue in the bin, and then wash their hands immediately

Updated advice provided on the 12 March 2020 suggests that schools should remain open. However, if a child or adult develops a **new** cough and a mild temperature they should self-isolate for a 7 day period. If you require any further information or assistance please call NHS Direct Wales on 0845 46 47 or 111.



More detailed advice is however provided on the Public Health Wales website at:
<https://phw.nhs.wales/topics/latest-information-on-novel-coronavirus-covid-19/guidance-for-schools-advice-for-parents-or-carers/>

I hope that this letter provides the necessary reassurances that schools are receiving appropriate advice in relation to this matter.

Yours sincerely

Gaynor Davies

Gaynor Davies
Director of Education and Inclusion Services

