

COVID-19 update and advice

20 March 2020

Dear parent/carer,

We wanted to get in touch with you to share the latest advice and information in relation to Coronavirus (COVID-19).

We know that for many families across York, the recent announcement of schools and early year's closures (for the majority of children) will cause confusion and worry. We want to ensure you are informed with the most accurate and up-to-date information to help guide your family through these significant changes to daily life, and to equip you with the knowledge of support and resources available to help you and your children at this time.

School attendance

We understand that clarification around the Prime Minister's announcement made on Wednesday 18 March is needed. We are awaiting further instruction from the Department of Education as to which children qualify to continue attending school and how this will be administered.

Further information on 'key workers' and school attendance will be issued as soon as we have been informed.

Learning at home and online

Schools will be sending out information about the learning resources they will be providing for children who are staying at home over the next few weeks – this will be a mixture of online learning and hard copy learning packs. They are also putting plans in place to ensure that children without access to computers can borrow one from school or will be provided with a hard copy learning pack.

Talking to children about COVID-19

Your children will understandably have many questions about COVID-19. There are plenty of child appropriate resources available online to support you and your children in having a conversation to help them understand what COVID-19 is, how they can stay healthy and also explain what can happen if they do catch it.

Recommended online resources include:

- Fact sheets for children can be downloaded from the council website at: www.york.gov.uk/COVIDResources
- CBBC Newsround answer your question [here](#)

Health and wellbeing for families

We know that staying at home for a prolonged period can be difficult, frustrating and lonely for some people and that you or your family will be impacted by this disruption to daily life. It can be particularly challenging if you don't have much space or access to a garden.

It's important to remember to take care of your mind as well as your body and to get support if you need it. Stay in touch with family and friends over the phone or on social media. There are also sources of support and information that can help, such as the [Every Mind Matters](#) website.

Think about things you and your family can do during your time at home and share ideas with your friends who are in similar situations at home. Many families have kept themselves busy with activities

such as cooking, reading, online learning, arts and crafts, jigsaws, board games and watching films. If you feel well enough, don't forget to take regular exercise within your home or garden.

Recommended online resources include:

- Guide to supporting children and young people about mental health can be downloaded from the council website at: www.york.gov.uk/COVIDResources
- [Nuffield Health – Children's Home Exercise Video](#)
- [NHS 10-minute home workouts](#)
- [This Girl Can – Home exercise](#)

By staying home, you are protecting the lives of others, as well as making sure the NHS does not get overwhelmed.

Advice for families who are self-isolating

Government advice for families who have to self-isolate as a whole household can be found online [here](#).

Key advice includes:

- if you live with others and you are the first in the household to have symptoms of coronavirus, then you must stay at home for 7 days, but all other household members who remain well 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.
- for anyone else 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.
- 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
- if you can, move any vulnerable individuals (such as the elderly and those with underlying health conditions) out of your home, to stay with friends or family for the duration of the home isolation period
- if you cannot move vulnerable people out of your home, stay away from them as much as possible
- if you have coronavirus symptoms:
 - do not go to a GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital
 - you do not need to contact 111 to tell them you're staying at home
 - testing for coronavirus is not needed if you're staying at home
- wash your hands regularly for 20 seconds, each time using soap and water, or use hand sanitiser
- if you feel you cannot cope with your symptoms at home, or your condition gets worse, or your symptoms do not get better after 7 days, then use the [NHS 111 online](#) coronavirus service. If you do not have internet access, call NHS 111. For a medical emergency dial 999

Stay up to date

For the latest government guidance on COVID-19 please go to www.gov.uk/coronavirus

For York specific advice and updates visit www.york.gov.uk/coronavirus

The Department for Education has also launched a new helpline to answer questions about COVID-19 related to education. Staff, parents and young people can contact the helpline as follows:

Phone: 0800 046 8687

Email: DfE.coronavirushelpline@education.gov.uk

Public Health England and the Department of Education are working closely with your school and York's educational services to share prompt advice and support.