

**John Masefield High School and Sixth Form Centre**

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Dear Parent / Carers

As our Government continues to advise that schools should remain open, I am updating you on the situation at JMHS. As many of you will know we were informed today by our H&S Advisors – Fire & Risk Management Services, that we should heed the advice given by Gov.uk regarding specific groups of pupils and staff who suffer from a variety of conditions. If you did not receive a call from us today and your child suffers from one of the categories below, please follow the advice given.

The affected groups are:

- aged 70 or older (regardless of medical conditions)
- under 70 with an underlying health condition listed below (i.e. anyone instructed to get a flu jab as an adult each year on medical grounds):
  - chronic (long-term) respiratory diseases, such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), emphysema or bronchitis
  - heart disease, such as heart failure
  - chronic kidney disease
  - chronic liver disease, such as hepatitis
  - chronic neurological conditions, such as Parkinson's disease, motor neurone disease, multiple sclerosis (MS), a learning disability or cerebral palsy
  - diabetes
  - problems with your spleen – for example, sickle cell disease or if you have had your spleen removed
  - a weakened immune system as the result of conditions such as HIV or AIDS, or medicines such as steroid tablets or chemotherapy
  - being seriously overweight (a BMI of 40 or above)
- those who are pregnant

There is some debate as to whether children should be included in the 'under 70' age group or whether this only refers to adults. Our interpretation of the advice, and that of our H&S Advisors, is that if anyone is under 70 and falls into one of the above groups they should be particularly stringent in following social distancing measures. This means they should:

1. avoid contact with someone who is displaying symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19). These symptoms include high temperature and/or new and continuous cough
2. avoid non-essential use of public transport, varying your travel times to avoid rush hour, when possible
3. work from home, where possible.
4. Avoid large gatherings, and gatherings in smaller public spaces such as pubs, cinemas, restaurants, theatre, bars, clubs
5. Avoid gatherings with friends and family. Keep in touch using remote technology such as phone, internet, and social media
6. Use telephone or online services to contact your or other essential services

Everyone should be trying to follow these measures as much as is pragmatic and be aware that this advice is likely to be in place for some weeks.

You will also notice that there is no official guidance regarding siblings attending school. Many parents today wished to collect all their children as they felt it appropriate not to have one child self-isolating and one child attending school. We are happy to support this and feel it is appropriate, however if you would prefer to continue sending your children who are not in one of the groups listed above, we would be willing to have them in school. This is a very grey area and we are therefore happy for parents/carers to assess the risks in their own families and to make their own decisions.

To date we have approximately ten staff and around 120 students who are now exercising social distancing measures and not coming onto the JMHS site. As this figure is likely to increase, I will be sending out more information shortly regarding lesson planning and, for some year groups, guides to studying at home.

We also wish to reiterate the Government advice regarding self-isolation. If anyone within a household has:

- Continuous cough (which COVID19 former sufferers have reported to be a very dry cough with no sputum);
- High temperature.

The whole household needs to self-isolate for 14 days from the time of onset of the symptoms to the household member. If an individual living alone displays the symptoms above, they need to self-isolate for 7 days from time of onset.

Although at first glance this seems contradictory, the experience so far tends to show that persons exposed to COVID-19 can take 2-5 days before they show any symptoms, hence the lag between 7 & 14 days.

Should staff or Parent have any queries regarding this, the Government link is <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

As ever we are grateful to all parents, carers, staff and students who are responding in such a positive and supportive way. We will continue to keep you informed via Parentpay and or website.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Evans  
Headteacher