

*To provide the highest possible quality of education for all local children,
in order to ensure pupils from all backgrounds are able to succeed.*



Dartmoor
MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

18th March, 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I have been working in schools for over 30 years and I can honestly say that we are presently navigating our schools through probably the most difficult time that I can remember.

May I take this opportunity to thank you for your ongoing support and understanding as we continue to tackle the difficulties that the Coronavirus pandemic is causing. Below, I have attempted to gather our thoughts and present stance which may change even before you have had the chance to read this letter!

Dartmoor Multi-Academy Trust continues to monitor the latest government advice regarding COVID-19 and will continuously review and update our approach to managing the risks presented by this virus. As you will no doubt be aware, the government has drastically escalated its control measures but schools still remain open. Our aim as a Trust is to continue to operate as normal as is possible in these extraordinary circumstances whilst taking the necessary steps to delay the spread of the virus and to protect those who are vulnerable due to their underlying health conditions.

Pupils and staff displaying symptoms

Current guidance regarding self-isolation is as follows: if a child/member of staff or another household member display the symptoms of a persistent cough and/or a high temperature (37.8c or above), then all household members must stay at home for 14 days. The 14-day period starts from the day when the first person in the house becomes ill. Should another family member subsequently become ill during this period, reference should be made to the full national guidance which can be accessed at:

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

Vulnerable groups

In addition, our focus must also be on protecting those in our schools and the community who are vulnerable due to their underlying medical conditions. As a result, national guidance describes the requirement for social distancing for vulnerable people. These groups have been defined as:

- those over 70 years of age
- those who are pregnant
- people with chronic respiratory diseases e.g. asthma, COPD, emphysema or bronchitis
- people with chronic heart, kidney or liver disease
- people with chronic neurological conditions, including Parkinson's disease, motor neurone disease, multiple sclerosis, a learning disability or cerebral palsy
- diabetes
- problems with your spleen such as sickle cell disease or if you have had your spleen removed
- a weakened immune system
- being seriously overweight (a BMI of 40 or above)

IN ASSOCIATION WITH



CEO Mr Daryll Chapman | VICE CEO Mrs Hazel Fox



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In line with national guidance, the Trust ***strongly advises*** that these people stay away from school for the next 12 weeks. Therefore, if you have a child at the school ***or a member of your household*** who falls within these categories, then please contact the school as we will look to accommodate any reasonable case. There is the potential for pupil absences falling within this category to be coded as 'exceptional circumstances' and all such cases will be viewed sympathetically.

More generally, the school will be focussing on its core activities. Off-site visits and extra-curricular activities will cease as will unnecessary events and visitors to the school site. Specifically, activities will alter in the following ways:

Meetings:

- All pupil assemblies will be suspended for the foreseeable future.
- All unnecessary face-to-face meetings with visitors - including parents – should cease. Telephone or email communication should be used instead. We request that parents do not turn up unannounced.
- We politely request that at this difficult time parents should not enter school buildings. If a meeting with staff is essential, then all parents must report to reception and follow any hygiene rules as instructed.
- Where meetings are essential, a suitable 2 m distance should be maintained between those attending.
- Staff have been advised not to shake hands with visitors.
- All necessary visitors will be asked to wash hands and/or sanitise their hands upon arrival if a washroom is not sited near reception.
- Anyone displaying any cold/flu symptoms, however trivial, must not come into a school.

On-site events and parents' evenings:

- Parents' evenings and other equivalent large gatherings on site will be postponed until further notice.
- Non-essential on site after school activities, including extra curriculum clubs and lessons will cease until further notice.

Off-site activities:

- Off-site visits and activities, including overseas trips, will now cease until April 16th 2020 at which point the situation will be reviewed in respect of visits planned for the summer term.



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School closure has not been directed by the Government at the time of writing. However, the situation is developing rapidly and depletion of our workforce could force schools to consider partial closure whereby certain year groups may be asked to stay at home. The Trust continues to monitor the situation as well as national guidance and respond accordingly. During any closure, partial or otherwise, we will aim to provide support for pupils on-line so that they may continue with their learning. This will be through a range of methods that will be discussed with children and which will also then be shared with parents/carers.

The Trust is also investigating options for maintaining access to free school meals in the event of school closures. Future communication will clarify the arrangements once the detail has been finalised.

In the event of any partial closure of a school, or even a national direction to close schools, the main point of communication with parents/ carers will be via the school websites, through the text messaging service and email. It is therefore vital that you ensure we have your up to date contact details on our system. Please do contact your school should you believe that your details need to be updated.

We recognise that some of these actions are significant and will inevitably cause inconvenience. However, we are sure you can appreciate the need to protect pupils, staff and the vulnerable in the wider community. We understand that these are unsettling times and that the evolving situation places a strain on you and your children, but we hope this helps to clarify our current position. The situation remains fluid, so we will keep our plan under constant review and ask our schools to notify you as things change.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Daryll Chapman'.

Daryll Chapman
Chief Executive Officer
Dartmoor Multi Academy Trust

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tania Skeaping'.

Tania Skeaping
On behalf of the Board of Trustees

