

Dear Parent/Guardian,

As Principal of Sperrin College, I recognise that there is considerable concern from both pupils and parents around the Coronavirus (COVID-19)

The Senior Management team and I continue to monitor the developing situation and are following all available advice from the Department of Education, The Education Authority and The Public Health Agency.

On the 12th March 2020, the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister informed the public that whilst Northern Ireland is now in the 'Delay' stage of the response plan, Northern Ireland's schools **will not close** at this stage. However, parents and guardians are advised that the situation is under constant review and this advice may change very quickly.

In light of this, I want to provide you with the following information and guidance.

Pupil and Staff Welfare

All staff, pupils and parents should continue to follow the advice provided by the public health agency. As the advice is being updated on a regular basis parents and guardians should login daily and follow the most recent procedures.

<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net./news/covid-19-coronavirus>

Infection Control Measures

All staff, pupils and parents should ensure they take all reasonable measures to ensure infection is controlled. There are general principles anyone can follow to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses, including:

- washing your hands often - with soap and water or use alcohol sanitiser if handwashing facilities are not available. This is particularly important after **taking public transport**
- covering your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throwing the tissue in a bin. See Catch it, Bin it, Kill it
- people who feel unwell should stay at home and should not attend work or any education or childcare setting
- pupils, students, staff and visitors should wash their hands:
 - before leaving home
 - on arrival at school
 - after using the toilet
 - after using keyboards
 - after breaks and sporting activities
 - before food preparation
 - before eating any food, including snacks
 - before leaving school
- use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available
- avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- avoid close contact with people who are unwell

- clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

The 'Delay' Stage-Additional Preventative Measures

In addition to the above infection control measures I have taken the following steps to help mitigate against the spread of the coronavirus.

- 1.No Sporting Fixtures or training sessions
- 2.No Swimming for Year 8
- 3.No Extra-Curricular Activities-including after school lessons
- 4.No Assemblies-Whole school or Year Group
- 5.No School Trips of any type (Residential or One day)
- 6.No Sponsored Walk
- 7.No choir practices
- 8.No staff training
- 9.Children who are unwell should remain at home, particularly if they are presenting with symptoms such as a cough, sore throat, breathlessness or fever.

These measures are to delay the spread of infection and to ensure safe staffing levels within school.

Distance Learning Planning

In the event that a decision is made to close the school, our priority is to ensure continuity of learning for all our pupils.

All pupils have been informed on how to use our distance learning platforms-these include, Google classroom, Showbie and Office 365 (Microsoft Teams)

KS3 Pupils:

Teachers will provide KS3 pupils with 'Project' type work. This can be either computer based or completed using normal file paper.

Pupils will be provided with information on how to access their work. The completed work should be given to the teacher on the pupils return to school.

Literacy and Numeracy: It is vitally important that ALL KS3 (Year 8 and Year 9) pupils continue to read their AR book daily and complete the STAR reading tests.

In addition, the 'My Maths' website, should be used daily to complete Mathematics tasks.

GCSE and A Level Pupils (Years 11-14)

Teachers will provide GCSE and A Level preparation work on a distance learning platform. All senior pupils have been trained on how to access these platforms. The pupils are expected to **submit work regularly** to staff via the distance learning platform. Staff will endeavour to provide feedback.

Public Examinations:

The Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) advises learners to prepare for examinations and assessment as usual.

They are working closely with Examination Regulators, Government Departments and other Awarding Organisations to consider how to manage any emerging risks to the smooth running of examinations and assessments.

They already have a broad range of contingencies to ensure the smooth operation of examinations.

They will update existing guidance to reflect any specific arrangements schools and colleges should put in place, if required.

In the meantime, the advice is very clear that, students, schools and colleges should continue to prepare for the summer examinations and assessments as usual. For updated advice see:

<https://ccea.org.uk>

Communication

Given the fluid nature of the situation, The Senior Management and I endeavour to provide you with regular updated information as we get it. Our normal communication channels will be used. Parental letters will be posted in the communication section of the school website www.sperrincollege.com .An alert text will be sent to the main parental contact to signpost you to the correspondence. Information will also be posted on Facebook and Twitter.

Pastoral Care for All

Sperrin College is an incredibly strong school community. This is our opportunity to pull together to support everyone. At a time, such as this, our young people may display signs of anxiety and worry. It is important that we stay calm, emotionally present and free from anxiety. This will provide our children with the support they need. As with all difficult situations, this will pass, and I hope we will return to normal school life soon.

Yours Sincerely

BA Heron

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Principal

B. Ed(Hons)PQH(NI)M.Ed.