



BARNARD CASTLE SCHOOL

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Registered Charity number 1125375
Registered as a Company Limited by
Guarantee in England number 6596258
Registered Office as below

Dear Parents and Guardians

Novel Coronavirus

I write to update and reassure you about the precautions we are taking at Barney to prevent against the Novel Coronavirus outbreak. We continue to monitor the situation regularly and are taking a dynamic approach to this complex and changing picture, following the advice of Public Health England (PHE) and the Boarding Schools Association (BSA) to ensure the health of our whole community, including pupils and staff.

We are mindful that there will be a number of parents who are concerned about the health of their children and would like to reassure you that we are assessing any potential risks on a daily basis. The advice we are following is regularly updated and I would encourage you to follow these updates on the PHE website which offers sensible and unbiased information to anyone who may be worried. Based on the current evidence from the World Health Organisation (WHO) and PHE there is no immediate cause for concern, however we have taken the following precautions:

- Currently we assess the risk as very, very low within our overseas boarding community. None of our overseas boarders from parts of the world currently affected are travelling home during half term, but will be staying locally with guardians.
- We are accepting no pupil or visitor from China and affected regions until the outbreak is contained.
- All staff, particularly medical centre and boarding staff, have been briefed on the signs and symptoms of the Novel Coronavirus.
- We continue with our usual practice of frequent reminders to all pupils of the importance of hand washing in keeping our whole community healthy.

The latest update from the NHS can be found here (www.nhs.uk/conditions/wuhan-novel-coronavirus).

As half-term approaches, we ask that any pupil or family who intends to travel to/from, or have direct contact with anyone from, a Novel Coronavirus affected area, to inform us immediately. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office currently advises against travel to Hubei Province.

Please note:

- Any pupil, parent or visitor who has travelled to or been in direct contact with anyone from a Novel Coronavirus affected area may be asked to remain at home to prevent the potential spread of the virus.
- We ask our international community to speak with their UK guardian to check that emergency cover can be made available and if not to let school know immediately.

The wellbeing of our whole school community is of the upmost importance at this time, especially those from China and other affected areas, and I am sure you will join me in supporting them during this worrying period. We will continue to keep you informed as the situation and official advice changes. Should you wish to discuss any of the above, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards

Suzanne Metcalf
Bursar