6th November 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

We hope you are all well. We are writing to you to provide an update regarding the new measures relating to Coronavirus and advice for schools, which came into place in England on 5th November 2020.

We would like to thank you all for your continued support during this difficult time. Closing a school is not something anyone wants to do and this decision will always be a last resort. We continue to ensure that our priority is the safety of your child and the adults working at Croft. This includes making sure that there are adequate numbers of staff in place to support the learning and safety of all of our pupils. Thank you to everyone for supporting your child to access live lessons this week and for your continued messages of support, they are very much appreciated.

School opening during lockdown

The government advice states:

*Being at school is vital for children’s education and for their wellbeing. Time spent out of school is detrimental for children’s cognitive and academic development, particularly for disadvantaged children. This impact can affect both current levels of education, and children’s future ability to learn. It continues to be our aim that all pupils, in all year groups, remain in school full-time.*

At Croft we fully support this and we will remain open to all pupils unless under exceptional circumstances. There may be times when your child needs to self-isolate and we will continue to provide education remotely at these times.

We appreciate that you may be anxious during this time and we understand this. If you wish to discuss your concerns please do not hesitate to contact your child’s class teacher or a member of the Senior Leadership team.

Clinically Vulnerable People

We have now been issued with further guidance regarding people who fall into the ‘Clinically Extremely Vulnerable’ category which states that anyone who falls into this category should not attend their place of work and should work from home.

Guidance for young people states:

*More evidence has emerged that shows there is a very low risk of children becoming very unwell from coronavirus (COVID-19), even for children with existing health conditions. Most children originally identified as clinically extremely vulnerable no longer need to follow original shielding advice. Parents should be advised to speak to their child’s GP or specialist clinician if they have not already done so, to understand whether their child should still be classed as clinically extremely vulnerable.*

If you feel that your child may be classed as clinically extremely vulnerable, please let us know and speak to your child’s doctor to gain clarification about whether this is still the case. If it is not the case they can return to school. If they are still classed as clinically extremely vulnerable then they can stay at home and remote learning will be provided for them. All other pupils should return to school.

Our Risk Assessment

Our Risk assessment is updated regularly by the Senior Leadership Team. This is an ever-changing situation and we appreciate your understanding and support when changes are made to our procedures within school.

We work with Public Health England, Durham Local Authority, Governors, our Federation, Croft Staff and Children to ensure our risk assessment and procedures are in line with guidance and work for us. We appreciate your feedback regarding our procedures and these are always considered. When considering policy and procedures, we always need to take into account that every school is unique and cannot all operate in the same way. What works for one school will not work for another.

We have made changes to the way our staffroom operates as well as break times and lunch times. Your child will also notice that extra signage has been put up around school reminding them to wear masks, stay apart and walk around school in a one way system. A copy of our full updated risk assessment can be found on the school website. During this week a full clean has taken place throughout the school and we are ready to welcome pupils back.

Face masks

Whilst we understand that lots of pupils and staff are exempt from wearing facemasks the guidance states that:

*Face coverings should be worn by adults and children aged 11 and above when moving around the premises, outside of classrooms or activity rooms, such as in corridors and communal areas where social distancing cannot easily be maintained.*

We believe that masks are vital in controlling the spread of coronavirus and we ask you to continue to work with us and encourage your child to wear a mask if they can.

Facebook

We have reviewed the way we use Facebook. We will no longer use Facebook as a means of communication during this time. We will communicate with you via text message and phone call so please ensure that we have correct contact numbers for you. Any documents we need to send home will be posted on the school website.

When to come to school

If a member of your household, support bubble or close contact is waiting for the results of a COVID-19 test or is displaying symptoms, please do not send your child to school. Sending your child to school in these circumstances means that we are put in the difficult position of having to isolate your child and get them home if the person in your house tests positive. Any coronavirus related absences will not affect your child’s overall attendance mark for this year. If you are at all unsure of whether to send your child to school please ring school and speak to a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

We would like to wish all of our staff and pupils who are currently unwell a very speedy recovery.

Thank you again for your support

V Elcock

Deputy Head Teacher