

16<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Dear Parents,

I wanted to write to you all to share with you the steps we are taking as a school community to keep all of our children and families safe. We understand that this is a worrying time for our local community and country but we know that by working in partnership, we can support each other through this.

I also wanted to share with you the latest information schools have been provided with and to clarify that the government's current strategy is that schools should remain open. To date, we have not been given any further information about school closure but as soon we do, I will of course be in touch again. The DfE guidance to schools was updated on 12th of March and this is what we are currently following. It can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19> Like all schools in Torbay, we have been working closely with the Local Authority who have been keeping us regularly updated. We are also receiving and reviewing daily updates jointly from the Department for Education (DFE) and Public Health England (PHE) and continue to follow all of their guidance with regards to ensuring regular handwashing and hygiene within the academy.

We also wanted to share with you what we are doing in school at this time. Using the great age-appropriate resources which have been shared with us by the Government, we are ensuring that children are having the support they need, the chance to ask questions and watch videos on handwashing. The school has rigorous cleaning practices in place and children are washing their hands much more frequently throughout the day. We know that families will want to also be talking to children about the virus and have attached the link to the resources page for these: <https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/schools>

As mentioned earlier, we are closely monitoring updates from the Government as well as considering how to best support you, our community. The Government has reminded us all about our responsibility to be proactive in slowing the spread of Coronavirus in our communities and hand washing is the main action for this. Alongside this, we are now going to be putting further measures in place to try and protect our children, staff and indeed our wider community.



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With this in mind, we have looked at all events due to happen before Easter and looked at the risk of each event. We have therefore taken the decision not to go ahead with our planned Easter Service - whilst we know how much we all enjoy this event, and children

have been practising, we feel it is our responsibility to take steps to be proactive in supporting more vulnerable members within our communities. We are also postponing the School Disco that was due to take place this week and will find a new date for this to happen later in the year. The Local Authority has announced that the Torbay Schools Music Festival will be postponed to a later date which we will advise you of as soon as we know. In addition to this, we will be holding daily Acts of Worship in the classroom rather than congregating together as a whole school. Talking to Headteachers from across Torbay, it is clear that most schools are postponing or cancelling events to minimise the risk of the spread of any infection.

We are sure that we are all keen to follow the Government advice on self isolation where symptoms are shown. Here is the link to this advice [Stay at home: guidance for people with confirmed or possible coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#). Please contact the academy office should your child need to follow these steps or if you have any questions regarding this. Our staff will also be following this advice and whilst we will be working hard to minimise changes or disruption to your child's education, we may need to accept there will be some inevitable changes. Again the safety and wellbeing of our children and staff are our priority and by following government guidance, we will be playing our part in supporting our community. As per our usual policy, if your child becomes unwell in school, we will be contacting you to come and collect them.

Please can we ask that our community continues to be respectful of one another and not to speculate should a child or staff member be absent from school. At this time, it is more important than ever to be kind and understanding towards each other.

As we all know from the Government updates, there are currently no planned school closures at this time. We wanted to reassure you that should this decision be taken, we are putting plans in place so that we would be able to communicate those to you directly. We use a wide range of communications with you and wanted to let you know that, in the event of Ilsham C of E Academy closing, we would be contacting families in the following ways: email, update on academy website <https://ilsham-lap.co.uk/>, My Ed app and Twitter. If you think that your email or contact details may need updating, please contact the academy office to do this. Please also ensure you have downloaded our My Ed app to enable you to receive updates immediately. If you are concerned that you do not have any internet access, please contact the academy office so that further measures can be discussed with you.



We have also started thinking ahead with regards to any national school closures announced by the Government and thinking about home learning resources for your child. We wanted to reassure parents that we are thinking about being sensible and practical with this, making it manageable for all. These resources will only be made available if we are instructed to close and so we are currently unable to provide these resources in individual cases before then. However, we be will updating the website over the coming days with links to activities and ideas to support parents and carers.

And to close, thank you for all of the friendly smiles and greetings as usual on the gate this morning and for offering your words of support and encouragement at this challenging time for us all.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J.A. Ryan".

Miss Ryan  
Head of Academy