Dear parents and carers,

At certain points in this letter I will highlight areas of action where we would ask parents to help us.

I am writing to explain some additional precautions that school will now take, based on National guidance, and actions agreed at a meeting of local primary headteachers on Friday 13th March, to further reduce the transmission of Covid 19. I know that you will support school in these steps as we attempt to ‘delay’ the spread of the virus. This is in no way intended to cause panic or additional concern. It just seems wise that all of us do the little things we can to help the situation.

Adults in school

- **Parents’ meetings this week will be conducted via class dojo as previously informed.** We ask that parents do not come into school for these. If a parent wishes to discuss any information in the report they will be able to **contact school via phone or email**. Equally, if a teacher has a particular concern they wish to discuss with you, they will do the same.

- As an alternative to the telephone, parents can **email the office (admin@milnthorpe.cumbria.sch.uk)** and the email will be forwarded to the relevant class teacher.

- Parents can use ‘class dojo’, telephone or email to **update the office and teachers about any absence**, illness, messages or information about clubs. We would ask you to visit the school office only if absolutely necessary. Any written notes or payments can be delivered by children in a labelled envelope (available from school).

- **Drop off and pick up** – we ask that adults continue to drop off EYFS children under the canopy area outside ‘Joey’s Nursery’ and avoid coming into school unless this is necessary and pick the children up from the same place. (We will bring the children to you). All other children can make their way into school independently so please don't accompany them. If you need to communicate with staff this can be done using any of the methods described above.

- **If a face to face meeting is necessary** this can be conducted after school in the entrance area outside the school office.

Monday 16th March 2020
- Where it is necessary for an adult to come into school we would ask that people continue to follow published guidelines about personal hygiene and contact with others.

**Closure**

These measures will hopefully delay the spread of the illness so that our school can remain open to children, as closure would prove an enormous challenge for families. Therefore, your help with this is essential. We the school will remain open for the foreseeable future or until advised otherwise.

**Illness**

Guidance to individuals on signs of illness have been updated;

To support the delay of the spread of the virus, the Department for Health and Social Care has asked anyone who shows certain symptoms to stay at home for 7 days, regardless of whether they have travelled to affected areas. This means people should stay at home and avoid all but essential contact with others for 7 days from the point of displaying mild symptoms, to slow the spread of infection.

**The symptoms are:**
- A high temperature (37.8 degrees and above)
- A new, continuous cough

Please do not send your child to school if this is the case. In the event of a child displaying symptoms of illness in school, as is our usual practise, we would contact you immediately to collect them from school.

**Communication**

Please could you use class dojo to communicate directly with class teachers or telephone the office.

Again, I would also encourage families to pay little heed to any information that circulates that does not come from an official Government or school source. Rumours will inevitably abound concerning exposure to the virus and diagnosis. Please await official communications before making decisions concerning attendance at school etc. Equally, do not hesitate to contact me if you have a concern about something you have read or heard.

**Information for families**

As ever, we will continue to monitor the situation and follow the guidance published to us. Further guidance is available to families from the following dedicated helpline;

**Department for Education coronavirus helpline:** Phone 0800 046 8687 Open from 8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday
Here is a web link to the most up to date NHS Guidance:
https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/

Travel
I would encourage all families to consider any travel plans they have for the Easter break, in light of the current international picture of the outbreak. Please keep up to date with all official guidance and consider the extent to which your plans might put yourself, and in particular other, more vulnerable people at risk of being affected. I do not mean to interfere with people’s travel plans, however, some compromise on the part of individuals and families may well secure a more positive outcome for our community.

If anyone connected to our school has reason to believe they might have been affected by Covid 19 (for example, in contact with someone who has visited a destination where Covid 19 is a particular concern) I would appreciate being informed so that we can seek guidance on how to respond as quickly as possible.

Healthy Living

In school, we continue to promote the benefits of a healthy lifestyle as a means to stay well (regular hand washing, using tissues for runny noses, drinking plenty of water at breaks and eating a healthy balanced diet). We will also continue to promote a calm and considered approach to this situation, focusing on understanding facts rather than reacting to rumours and misinformation.

In the majority of cases, people diagnosed with Covid 19 go on to make a full recovery experiencing only mild, flu like symptoms. When patients become particularly unwell this is as a result of other ongoing medical conditions. When this is the case, we benefit from having a fantastic National Health Service to support. I would encourage everyone to remain calm and optimistic in the hope that this situation will pass without having a significant negative impact on our community.

Please do use the advice line above or contact me with any concerns.

Best regards

Andrew Hyde
Head teacher
Milnthorpe Primary School