17.3.20

Dear parents/carers

Re: PCHSC's Emergency Plan re Coronavirus

As you will be aware from watching the news etc the Coronavirus is spreading at an alarming rate, and whilst the government is asking all schools to remain open at the moment, for special schools with particularly vulnerable students, this is becoming increasingly challenging. We are aware that several special schools in Lancashire are partially or completely closing – especially when they are too short-staffed to safely open.

In recent days myself, other senior leaders and Governors have drafted an Emergency Response Plan for PCHSC, and I would like to share some of the key information from this with you.

1. Impact of staff absence
-   Up to 50% absence in relation to Senior Leadership Team, admin etc we will endeavour to keep the school open but less than this we will not be able to do this.
-   Teaching and non-teaching staff would need to be able to operate on a ratio of 12 students (max) with 3 staff. If we need to partially close, we have agreed to prioritise students in Yr 11 and 14 who are taking accreditation, students whose needs could be met on these reduced staff: student ratios and the ultimate protection of our most vulnerable learners.
-   After school clubs will be cancelled from the end of this week onwards.
-   Transport staff are the responsibility of LCC. However, if they are unable to find replacement staff and/or there is an LCC decision to cease transport – parents would be encouraged to bring in and pick up their own children (if school is partially open).
-   Cleaning and catering staff are similarly the responsibility of Engie and LCC respectively. However, if they are unable to replace such colleagues, we would have no option but to make sections or all of school unavailable.

2. Impact of issues with the building and supplies
If there is an actual diagnosis of Coronavirus on site, PCHSC will be forced to close for 72 hours whilst Engie complete a deep clean.

If there is a lack of food or other supplies, we will make a decision on partial or full closure based on the extent and type of unavailability. For example, a lack of soap or cleaning products would prevent us from keeping the environment clean enough to open.

3. Communication with parents/carers

In the event of partial or complete school closure – we will use our texting service to communicate with parents, update our school answer phone message (01282 682260) and make this announcement on Radio Lancashire.

We will regularly up-to-date key messages on our school website (https://www.pchs.lancs.sch.uk/). This will include a list of form tutor and emergency staff emails as required.

Once we are safe to re-open the school (following advice from Public Health England, Government /DfE etc) we will communicate de-activating this plan in the same manner.

As mentioned in my previous letter (dated 12.3.20), our governors and staff team recognise that for a small percentage of our students especially with underlying health problems, this is a particularly concerning time. The DfE are now advising that any child with asthma or respiratory problems should not come into school. Any parents or carers who have additional concerns about their child's health and wish to withdraw their child from school prior to any enforced closure taking place, also have the full support of myself and the Governing Body to do so.

Clearly if your child or any of your family have a cough; a high temperature and/or shortness of breath it is essential that you do not send them into school, and do keep them at home for 14 days in keeping with the Government's current guidance.

Many thanks as always for your understanding in this unprecedented situation. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact school and we will respond accordingly.

Yours sincerely

Chris Lingard - Headteacher