COGNITA

4 March 2020

Dear Parent

I wanted to write to parents at all 40 of our schools in the UK to update you on our planning in relation to coronavirus in light of the government's release of their Coronavirus Action Plan.

In the UK, we are adhering to the guidance and protocols of Public Health England (PHE). However, one of the advantages of being part of a global schools group is that we can draw on the experience of our colleagues in other parts of the world and the range of measures they have taken to respond to the unfolding crisis over many weeks now. This has included using technology to maintain teaching and learning amid government-mandated closures of all schools in Hong Kong and Vietnam. By contrast, in Singapore and Thailand, our schools have stayed open during a period of heightened risk by implementing decisive measures such as screening temperature at the school gate.

Fortunately, we are not at the same level of risk in the UK, but we are planning ahead to ensure we are prepared. We have reviewed the UK Government's Coronavirus Action Plan published yesterday. While this did not contain a high level of detail, there are a number of key measures we are taking in our schools, including a heightened focus on hygiene. Our additional measures include:

Travel. From a groupwide perspective, we have implemented a travel ban to the most affected countries. For some time, we have been requiring all our people to declare if they or their families are travelling overseas. One positive learning from Singapore is that parents there are self-reporting all travel plans to the schools. This allows their school to be fully informed in the event government travel advice alters and we believe this approach would be beneficial for our schools here in the UK. We would therefore be grateful if you would inform your school of any overseas travel plans by family members in order to monitor risk more effectively.

School Trips. We are working with our schools to take a measured approach for trips planned in the coming weeks. We are recommending the postponement or cancellation of trips to Northern Italy, which is the highest risk region in Europe. For trips to other parts of Europe and further afield we are following Government advice and conducting our own detailed risk assessments. School trips are a fundamental part of a child's educational experience, developing character and creating lifelong memories, so we will seek to keep trips running if at all possible whilst being sensible about the risks involved and keeping parents updated.

Social Distancing. We will risk-assess and restrict as necessary the exposure of pupils to significant numbers of other people, including avoiding large sports and entertainment events. However, we intend to maintain sports activities, including fixtures with other schools, unless the overall risk level increases.

Temperature Checking. As a precautionary measure, we are asking that you take your child's/children's temperature each day prior to coming to school. If their temperature is below 38c, they may come to school as normal. Should their temperature be 38c or above, we advise that they do not attend school but self-isolate and contact NHS 111 for further advice. We are also introducing this measure for our staff.

Possible School Closure. We are also preparing for the *possibility* of prolonged school closures in the UK in the event of a more serious outbreak of coronavirus. As we have done in Vietnam and Hong Kong, we would establish a virtual online teaching and learning programme, particularly for our GCSE, A-Level and IB Diploma students, who are at a critical stage of preparation for their national examinations. The experience of our Asian schools is that in these circumstances maintaining a structured, timetabled day is most productive, with regular breaks for exercise. We are following up with the various public exam boards so that we will know early what contingency plans they have in the event of a more extensive outbreak. In the instance that a school is closed for a shorter period up to five days, schools will deploy a remote learning protocol; teachers will provide home learning tasks to students by normal means of school communication. If circumstances allow, hard copy learning packs may be distributed.

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Please be reassured that we are prioritising the management of this issue in a way that is both proportionate and well-informed. Our Consultant Nurse has supported Cognita historically through SARS, Swine flu and other epidemics, so we have great experience to call on. On a positive note, COVID-19 infections in children and young people are rare indeed and, where they have occurred, tend to be mild.

In closing, our commitment to children's wellbeing is all the more important at this time. Our Group Director of Wellbeing has shared this link from the Child Mind Institute about talking to young children about coronavirus without making them more worried.

We will continue to keep parents updated. In the meantime, if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me at stuart.rolland@cognita.com.

Yours sincerely

Stuart Rolland
Chief Executive Europe