

## The Senior Leadership Team

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Dear parents,

You cannot fail to be aware of the epidemic of coronavirus which is affecting many cities in China and is slowly spreading around the world. At the time of writing there have been no confirmed cases of coronavirus in Turkey but it can only be a matter of time before it does reach here. As an international community we cannot ignore this epidemic, anyone who has travelled internationally may have come into contact with carriers simply by going through airports and so precautions must be taken. It is certainly not the case that you and your family are at risk only if you have travelled to China, though we believe the risk may be greater if you have recently visited China.

The virus, which originated in animals has now been confirmed as a human-to-human transmission virus. According to the World Health Organisation the symptoms of this virus are:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Breathing difficulties

It can lead to:

- Severe cough
- Pneumonia
- Severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS)
- Impaired liver and kidney function
- Kidney failure
- Death

Though it is not confirmed, it is believed that the incubation period for this virus is between 10 and 14 days.

The Ministry of Education have yet to make a pronouncement regarding the epidemic, but it is important that we keep our community safe whilst continuing with our primary function of educating your children. At present, there is no cause for alarm, but every reason to take precautions to prevent bringing this virus into the school.



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If you display any or all of the four symptoms mentioned above you should:

1. Seek medical help immediately
2. Keep your children off school for at least two weeks to see if they too begin to exhibit any of the symptoms
3. You and your family should attempt to quarantine yourselves in your home for the period of your infection in order to prevent the spread of the virus into the local community.

Even if you do not experience the symptoms of this virus, it makes sense to take basic precautions:

1. Use a tissue to cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing – airborne viruses spread very easily through coughs and sneezes. Teach your children to do the same.
2. Wash and disinfect your hands thoroughly after coughing or sneezing. Disinfectant hand wash is available at school outside all toilets. Tell your children to use them.
3. Face masks may prevent the virus being spread from other people and BISI has no objection whatsoever to students using face masks for this purpose during this time. Face masks should be available in your local pharmacy.

Remember, coughs and sneezes spread diseases! Let us all work together to keep this epidemic away from our school and our community.

Yours faithfully,

The Senior Leadership Team

