**17/03/20 - Coronavirus update from our Specialist College**

We have followed government guidance for staff and a small number of staff are now working from home who have underlying health conditions or are pregnant. Due to this we have instigated some timetable changes which the students are coping with really well. Our Facilities staff have doubled their deep clean routines and we have asked staff to regularly wipe down workstations, door handles etc around College.

The announcement from Central Government yesterday was:

We are advising those who are at increased risk of severe illness from coronavirus (COVID-19) to be particularly stringent in following social distancing measures.

This group includes those who are:

* chronic (long-term) respiratory diseases, such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), emphysema or bronchitis
* chronic heart disease
* chronic kidney disease
* chronic liver disease, such as hepatitis
* chronic neurological conditions, such as motor neurone disease, multiple sclerosis (MS), a learning disability or cerebral palsy
* diabetes
* problems with your spleen – for example, sickle cell disease or if you have had your spleen removed
* a weakened immune system as the result of conditions such as HIV and AIDS, or medicines such as steroid tablets or chemotherapy

Full details are available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-social-distancing-and-for-vulnerable-people/guidance-on-social-distancing-for-everyone-in-the-uk-and-protecting-older-people-and-vulnerable-adults>

I realise that these are difficult times when decisions have to be made without having the advantage of experience. If you need any support or advice and you don’t feel the webpage helps you make those decisions, please contact us and we will try to give some guidance.

**19/03/20 - Message from Adrian Sugden, Henshaws Specialist College Principal:**

I would like to start by saying we have been overwhelmed by the messages of support sent into the college from parents and the level of understanding. It has been a great boost to all our staff through this challenging time.

As I am sure you are very aware the Government last night announced the closure of all schools, colleges and universities, with the exception of students whose parents are ‘Key workers’ and children who have social workers or have a EHCP. Clearly this indicates that they intend for specialist settings to remain open. We are working hard to establish our staff cohort and which students we can safely support. This is challenging as it changes almost hourly.

It is difficult to fully understand the vague and mixed messages sent from central government about vulnerable young people and to identify the best course of action. We do believe as long as we can offer a safe service it is right, we remain open. However, this service may look different from our normal service, different days or times, and may change on a weekly basis. We appreciate your understanding and support and we will keep you up to date with our college activities as often as things change.

**20/03/20 - Message from Adrian Sugden, Henshaws Specialist College Principal:**

It has been a challenging week and I want, once again, to thank all our parents and carers for their patience, understanding and support.

We received some really significant information from the government this morning about ‘Critical workers’ and this has secured some of our staffing for next week so we can continue offering a safe service. I forwarded the information below to LA’s today explaining what we have done and intend to do in the near future. As you will now be aware, we are going to shorten the day to finish at 3pm. I have decided to do this for many reasons, the main one being to maintain the well being of staff, who may be working through the holidays to support other Critical workers in these difficult times.

Central Government has announced “Special schools, colleges and local authorities are advised to make case by case basis assessments of the health and safeguarding considerations of pupils and students on an education, health and care (EHC) plan. For some, they will be safer in an education provision. For others, they will be safer at home. We trust leaders and parents to make these decisions and will support them as required.”

• We are open and will remain open as long as we can offer a safe service
• We have 71 staff absent as of today’s date and about 25% of our student cohort have self-isolated
• We have quarantined all College campus buildings to reduce risk
• We have separated our clinical teams into two and they work in separate buildings to ensure continuity of service if one group gets any symptoms
• We are delivering education but not normal timetabled lessons
• We continue to offer therapies but have closed the hydro pool
• We intend to stay open for Critical Workers children over Easter
• We have adjusted the number of days some students attend due to staffing
• We are going to start finishing at 3pm from next week
• We send daily email updates to parents and these are on our @henshawscollege Facebook
• The senior team are phoning all students parents weekly to check on well being
• We are producing video therapies for parents to give simple physio exercises for students at home
• We have produced social stories for parents to use with students at home
• We are producing and will be provided PEC’s materials for parents to use
• We have provided a staffed ‘Live’ helpline for Assistive Technology and provided the equipment needed for the students to help parents use these with students successfully
• We track staff numbers daily for Fire Marshals, Safeguarding, First aiders and DSL’s

I hope you keep well, have a nice weekend and stay safe. Any questions please contact us.