

8 Park Drive,
Port Elizabeth, 6001

E-mail: prep@stgeorges.co.za
Tel: +27(0) 41 585 4825
Fax: +27(0) 41 585 1638

Campus Head Mr Alex Hall
(B Prim Ed, UPE)
www.stgeorges.co.za



ST GEORGE'S
PREPARATORY

13 March 2020

Coronavirus (COVID-19)- correspondence 2

Dear St George's Family

We have no doubt that you are all as concerned with the recent count of infected South Africans with Coronavirus (COVID-19) as we are. This letter serves as further communication to you as to the steps we are currently taking as a school.

- We are in communication with professionals in the medical field as well as our policy unit at ISASA for regular updates on best practice.
- Mr Hartel has met with and briefed the Cleaning and Catering staff and has consulted with our cleaning product suppliers as to the correct sanitization products to use within the school environment.
- All Kitchen and Dining Room work surfaces and tables are being sanitized on a regular basis.
- Children/Staff will wash their hands with sanitizer upon entry and exit of the dining hall.
- All our bathrooms are supplied with hand soap and signs as to the correct way to wash hands are being replaced.
- All classrooms and public areas have hand sanitizers.
- Children will wash their hands with sanitizer when entering and exiting the computer labs.
- Discussions to raise awareness have taken place with the pupils in the Senior Prep and a pocket sized, foldable comic book [Click here](#) at an age appropriate level has been shared with the children.
- The Junior Prep and Pre-Preparatory children are being reminded of general cleanliness and hygiene as well as being given proper instructions as to how to correctly wash their hands.
- We are also advising the children and staff to refrain from handshakes, hugs etc and encouraging physical distancing when appropriate.
- All school activities will continue as normal presently.
- Larger group gatherings (assemblies, morning lines, community singing etc) will be put on hold with immediate effect.
- As a precautionary measure, we also will not allow birthday treats to be brought to school or the sharing of lunch boxes.
- We insist that any children displaying any signs or symptoms of a cold or flu/fever are to stay at home and only to return to school once all symptoms have dissipated and their temperature has remained stable for at least 48 hours at less than 37.5° C and a Doctor's Certificate is issued for their return.
- If a child has a temperature higher than 37.5° C and attends school, the child will be isolated in the sick bay and parents will be called to come and fetch their child immediately.

- We will be implementing a 14 day self-quarantine period as of Monday 16 March, for families who have:
 - travelled from an heavily affected areas within the past 14 days
 - had direct contact with anyone who has travelled from a heavily affected area within the past 14 days
 - have been in contact with anyone diagnosed with COVID-19
 - the heavily affected areas are as follows: China, Italy, Iran, South Korea, Spain, France, Germany, USA, Switzerland, Norway, Japan, Sweden, Demark, Netherlands, Austria, Belgium and the UK. Please follow [this link](#) for updates on affected areas.
 - Parents will be requested to complete a declaration form [click here](#) and asked to contact the school (Miss Pattison at the Prep and Mrs Alexandris at the Pre-Preparatory) if you need to self-quarantine.
 - We clearly will be reliant on total transparency from all our parents in this regard and ask for your full support.

Please also consult the WHO (World Health Organisation) website [click here](#) which thoroughly covers most questions and supplies sage advice when dealing with Coronavirus (COVID-19). The National Institute for Communicable Diseases provides relevant information as well [click here](#). I have also attached an extract from a memo received from ISASA.

We will be monitoring the situation on a daily basis and if a decision is made to close the school at any point we will notify the parent body as soon as possible. We are already forward planning for such an outcome and will be looking at options of online learning for pupils in the event of a decision to close.

Our collective approach as a community in managing our personal hygiene and monitoring our health continues to be the way we can all help. Please check each morning and keep your children at home if he/she has a fever or is feeling unwell and seek the correct medical attention. We will continue to take daily precautions with health and hygiene at school, disinfecting surfaces regularly, providing hand sanitizers and reinforcing washing of hands regularly and good hygiene practices.

We should use social media at this time responsibly, as mis-information and spreading of rumours etc is not in the best interest of all. Please also be mindful that there is also a lot of 'fake news' out there, already a release from UNICEF has proven to be false.

The health and well-being of our community remains our top priority and we appreciate your understanding and support to keep St George's as safe as possible.

Kind regards



Alex Hall

What is a Coronavirus?

Coronaviruses are a large group of viruses that are common among animals. In rare cases, they are what scientists call Zoonotic. Zoonotic diseases are infectious diseases caused by bacteria, viruses and parasites that are transmitted from animals to humans. In cases of infection, some humans are known to have illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS).

What is a Novel Coronavirus?

Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) is a new or “Novel” strain of coronavirus that has not been previously identified in humans. There is currently no vaccine for the Novel Coronavirus.

How does the Novel Coronavirus spread?

The Novel Coronavirus is a respiratory virus which spreads primarily via contact with an infected person through respiratory droplets generated when a person, for example, coughs or sneezes, or through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose. As a result, it is important that everyone practices good respiratory hygiene. For example, sneeze or cough into a flexed elbow, or use a tissue and discard it immediately into a closed bin. It is also very important for people to wash their hands regularly with either alcohol-based hand sanitiser or soap and water.

What are the symptoms of Novel Coronavirus?

The symptoms are usually a mild to moderate upper respiratory tract illness, a runny nose, cough, sore throat, possibly a headache and maybe a fever, similar to a common cold. These symptoms are said to last for a couple of days. Infected patients have typically experienced a mild cough for a week, followed by shortness of breath causing them to visit a hospital. It is further reported that, so far, around 15 to 20% of cases have become severe, requiring patients to be isolated in hospitals. Persons with a weakened immune system could suffer more serious respiratory tract illnesses such as pneumonia or bronchitis.

When should one be tested for COVID-19?

You should contact your doctor **by phone** for advice if you have:

- an acute respiratory infection (sudden onset of either a cough, and/or a sore throat, and/or shortness of breath) and in the 14 days before the start of your symptoms, you were either:
- in close contact with a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19 infection, or travelled to an area where there is ongoing community transmission of COVID-19, or
- worked in or attended a healthcare facility where patients with COVID-19 infections were being treated.

Who can be infected by the Novel Coronavirus?

If you reside in or have travelled to an area where the COVID-19 virus is circulating, you may be at risk of infection. Persons also at risk are those family members, co-workers or medical professionals caring for a patient before they knew the patient was infected with COVID-19, as well as health workers caring for persons who are sick with COVID- 19.

Is there treatment for COVID-19?

There is currently no vaccine or specific treatment, generally symptoms will subside on their own. Doctors can help relieve symptoms by prescribing a pain or fever medication. Keeping hydrated is highly advised as well as getting rest and as much sleep as possible.

How you can protect yourself from infection?

Wash your hands frequently with soap or use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser.

Maintain social distancing – maintain at least a 1 metre distance between yourself and other people, particularly those who are coughing, sneezing and have a fever.

Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth.

If you have fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical care early.

Individuals with severe respiratory complications or a compromised immune system need to take additional precautions.