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**From:** PERMANENT, Secretary [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=78A2F6AB5C5545DC9911C45260E38042-SPERMANENT]  
**Sent:** 11/02/2020 15:03:18  
**To:** MCCULLY, Andrew [andrew.mccully@education.gov.uk]; MORRIS, Indra [indra.morris@education.gov.uk]; MILNER, Eileen [eileen.milner@education.gov.uk]; KETT, Paul [paul.kett@education.gov.uk]  
**CC:** GREEN, Mike [mike.green@education.gov.uk]; PERMANENT, Secretary [permanent.secretary@education.gov.uk]  
**Subject:** DG kit readout - Tuesday 11th February

Dear DGs

Please see below for a note from your short DG kit this morning.

**Irrelevant & Sensitive**

Coronavirus

- Iain and James updated DGs on the current situation and plans. There are weekly Cobras, with increasing level of activity across govt - at the moment Nick Gibb is going, but if it gets more serious SoS would go instead. There are 2 likely scenarios - one where the virus is largely contained and one where it is not and takes hold in a large number of countries. This second scenario needs some more active planning - we have a reasonable worst case scenario with a list of problems to consider e.g. impact on exam season, international students.
- Minister Gibb attending Cobra tomorrow to go through these scenarios and consider how we deal with consequences and what our response would be. ERG are also using 20 mins at end of the Gold team exercise next week to go through plans.
- Iain asked that DGs give policy experts flexibility to respond quickly to requests from ERG. Right now DOC is sufficiently resourced but they might need to look for more staff at some point.
- On Friday there was a coordination of a response in case we needed to close a school. We have learnt some lessons from this about our liaison with PHE. Now we are confident that we are ready to respond within an hour.
- In discussions DGs said:
  - **It is important that we confirm actions with ERG first in order to ensure we are clear on exactly what we are needing to do in emergency situations, as there had been a situation where requests changed in a short space of time.**
  - There was some uncertainty about who is responsible for student wellbeing in these situations e.g. PHE, Local Authorities, DfE. There is some anxiety that we are taking actions on top of what LAs are already doing and that we are not coordinated. We need to make sure we are coordinated, while also giving Ministers space to take action as well. There is the risk that some schools act on their own without advice from PHE, or linking in with us, so we need to prepare for that. At the moment we do not act without instruction from PHE, but at some point we may need to be more self sufficient.
  - **ESFA have well established front door to schools and colleges so we should ensure that we use that avenue for clear comms to go direct to front line.**
  - **We also have learners who are in employment situations e.g. apprenticeships, so need to think about how we contact them.**
  - There have been some instances of discrimination, and there are concerns that schools will overapply guidance, resulting in discrimination against Chinese nationals, or those returning from affected countries.

- They noted that staff had been asking about our plans, especially for those who are out talking to stakeholders, so it would be good to share messages around LT and wider SCS. Messages have already been shared with site leads. Indra also suggested involving the shadow LT.
- DGs keen to see the list of volunteers ERG are using to make sure it reflects up to date situation. At the moment they were looking for "doers and thinkers" but might need more leadership at some point as well.

Thanks

Kate

**Kate Parry**

Chief of Staff to the Permanent Secretary

Tel: I&S



Department  
for Education

**THINK, before you send an email**

- 1 Do I need to send an email to all these people?
- 2 Is it obvious what I'm asking for in the subject?  
E.g. For Info, For Action, For Approval etc.
- 3 Is the deadline clear?

