

Coronavirus Statement

Customers

17 March 2020

Protecting our staff and you our loyal customers is our priority in this difficult time. It is with regret that we will be **closing our centres** as of **Tuesday 17th March at 10pm 2020**. We are unsure of the length of time we will be closed but will update all our customers and staff regularly with updates. All customer subscriptions and accounts will be placed on hold/frozen until further notice. We will be unable to process any refunds at this time. Those customers paying by Direct Debit will have their accounts frozen by the end of the week (Sunday 22nd March 2020). We will be unable to answer phone calls to you, however if you do have any queries please contact us using **admin@firststrokes.com**

The UK government has advised that everyone in the UK should now avoid “non-essential” travel and contact with others to fight coronavirus. Whilst it has not issued any ban on public gatherings of any size either indoors or outdoors at this stage, the advice is to avoid non-essential contact with others, including going to sporting events, pubs, clubs, theatres and social venues.

As a result, FIRST STROKES advise that all face-to-face activity such as club training sessions, events, competitions, club committee and face-to-face meetings, swim camps, swim groups and social events should be suspended.

The decision has been taken in the interests of all our swimmer, parents, coaches, volunteers and the wider communities. This decision is also in alignment with actions taken by the local councils and is similar to action taken by other sports related businesses.

First Strokes will continue to review and monitor government advice and will provide detailed updates on the impact to our centres and lessons in the coming weeks. We appreciate that the current situation will undoubtedly place our members & staff in a difficult situation, and we are working with Swim England on the best way to help alleviate the situation and will update you as plans evolve.

Social distancing and advice

Social distancing measures (as defined by Public Health England as spending more than 15 minutes and within a 2-metre distance talking to someone) are now advised not only if we test positive or have symptoms, but in day to day life. As well as current travel advice, the current UK government is advising anyone with a “new, continuous” cough or high temperature and those they live with need to self-isolate for 14 days.

At Risk groups

The latest advice from the government's chief medical adviser is that those over 70 currently do not need to be self-isolating. However, in the coming days, every Briton over the age of 70 and those in at-risk groups over the age of 70 will be advised to be "largely shielded from social contact" for 12 weeks to help protect themselves. Those with underlying medical issues such as high blood pressure, lung complaints and weakened or compromised immune systems are more likely to develop serious illness as a result of the disease.

Anyone with a higher risk from viruses such as cold or flu should take sensible steps to reduce the risk of picking up infections.

- wash your hands with soap and water often – do this for at least 20 seconds
 - always wash your hands when you get home or into work
 - use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available
 - cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze
 - put used tissues in the bin immediately and wash your hands afterwards
 - avoid close contact with people who have symptoms of coronavirus
 - use phone, online services, or apps to contact your GP surgery or other NHS services.
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