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VIRUS PANIC HITS SCHOOLS

**++ Pupils and staff sent home all over UK ++ Contagion
strikes across Europe ++ Britons warned: Avoid north Italy**

By **Sophie Borland, Mario Ledwith,
Amelia Clarke and Ben Spencer**

PUPILS and teachers at 18 schools were sent home yesterday amid fears they have picked up coronavirus on ski trips to Italy.

The drastic step was taken as the deadly disease increased its foothold across Europe. Austria, Switzerland, mainland Spain and Croatia confirmed their first cases and fresh outbreaks were reported around Milan and Venice.

The Foreign Office is now urging Britons to avoid all but essential travel to 11 affected towns in northern Italy while those returning from the region are being told to 'self-isolate' if they feel unwell.

As UK officials revealed they were considering closing schools and transport networks in the event of a global pandemic:

- Nearly £100billion has been wiped off the FTSE 100 in two days;
- A hotel in Tenerife with hundreds of guests including Britons was in lockdown;
- The Government is stockpiling drugs for malaria and HIV in the hope they can also treat coronavirus;
- Some NHS patients with severe chest infections will be tested for the virus even if they haven't visited an at-risk country;
- The Six Nations match between Ireland and Italy next Saturday could be called off;
- A senior US official warned that it was a

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Unsmiling:
The Duke of
Sussex in
Edinburgh
last night



**Happy to
be home
Harry?
Prince is
back in
Britain**

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