

Dear parents and carers

Re: Buses and confirmed Covid cases

I am conscious that many of you have been left unsettled by the issue of buses in relation to positive Covid cases – in particular, the incident where a significant number of students had to self-isolate as a result of being on the top deck of the 41 bus on given days. I too have found this an especially thorny issue and, having spent a lot of time looking at it, am writing to give you an update.

I finally managed to speak to someone from public health yesterday and they confirmed that we had taken the correct approach. We tried hard to identify 'close contacts' (i.e. people sitting within two metres for more than 15 minutes) but, for various reasons in this particular case, we were not able to be confident we had identified most of them. As a result, we felt we had no option but to ask anyone who had travelled on the top deck in the relevant time period to self-isolate. I pushed the public health professional quite hard on this, and she went to consult with others before getting back to me to say that asking the whole top deck to isolate in these circumstances was the right course of action – the risk of the virus spreading more widely was too great otherwise.

For future incidents, we will be adopting the same approach and working very hard to identify close contacts so that we can avoid asking more students than strictly necessary to isolate. I do expect us to be able to limit the numbers in most instances – for several reasons, we were quite unlucky with combination of circumstances when it came to the 41 buses. In the only other case we have had so far that involved a bus, we were able to successfully identify just 3-4 students who needed to self-isolate. I obviously cannot promise anything, but I expect this more recent case to prove to be more typical; I certainly hope so.

Buses will always be especially tricky, but there are things we can do to help reduce the numbers being sent home in the event of a positive case. I would therefore be very grateful if you could go through the following points with your child(ren) and make sure they respect them, bearing in mind that school staff cannot travel on buses all the time to enforce rules and so we need students to exercise social responsibility:

1. As far as possible, use the same bus each day – morning and evenings.
2. As far as possible, try to sit in the same seat/area
3. As far as possible, sit with people from your own year group
4. Make sure you wear a face mask at all times
5. Sanitise hands before and after getting on the bus

If all students do all of these things as much as they can, then we have a much better chance of being able to quickly identify close contacts. It also means that, when there is a positive case, the number of students who have to self-isolate will be minimised.

Headteacher: Mr Gwyn Williams

Lymm High School, Oughtrington Lane, Lymm, WA13 0RB
01925 755458 info@lymmhigh.org.uk www.lymmhigh.org.uk



On a slightly different note, I know that some of you have been querying the lack of social distancing on buses. All I can say on this is that the government have made clear that they do not expect social distancing on school transport and have no intention of providing the kind of funding that would be needed for bus companies to run additional services. As with lots of other issues at the moment, we are working on the basis that we do what we reasonably can, when we can, to minimise risks but we have to accept that some things will just not be possible all of the time.

Kind regards
Gwyn Williams