

23rd September 2020

Dear parents and carers

Yesterday was a challenging day, trying to identify close contacts of the two students who had tested positive to ensure they left site as soon as possible, gathering lots of other contextual information and then making wider decisions in time to communicate with parents, students and staff. I had also been waiting for the advice from public health experts that we had been promised in such situations – support, which unfortunately did not come and, at the time of writing still hasn't. Many thanks for all your understanding as we tried our best to act and communicate quickly but reasonably; I've no doubt we missed a few things in amongst everything that was going on but it is clear most of you can see how far from ideal this kind of situation is, and we remain very grateful for your patience.

As things stand, I have still not heard back from Public Health England and, mindful of the need to offer some clarity and avoid more students missing more school than is strictly necessary, I have made the following decisions. If, in due course, I do receive instructions to the contrary from Public Health then you will have to forgive me if this changes again!

Sixth Form

Please click [here](#) for a separate letter from Mrs Jennings relating to sixth form students. You will see that we are asking all Year 13 students to stay at home for the rest of this week, with all lessons taking place via Zoom.

Students who have used the 41 bus

If your child did **not** sit on the upper deck of the bus at any stage during the relevant period (i.e. 16th, 17th, 18th and morning of 21st September) **then they can return to school tomorrow.**

The reason for this is that we are confident that the student who has tested positive only ever sat on the top deck and we are therefore treating any risk to those on the lower deck as very low – certainly not high risk enough to justify asking students to stay at home for 14 days.

As you know, there are two 41 buses in the morning. Despite our best efforts, we have not been able to draw a clear distinction between the two buses – they follow the same route and timetable, which means students will not be able to reliably tell whether they were on the bus on any given day with the student who tested positive. I'm afraid there is nothing we can do about this, frustrating as it is.

In taking this approach, we are relying on the honesty and goodwill of students and parents. We beg you **not to send your child into school if they used a 41 bus and sat on the top deck at any point during this period.**

Apologies for the mixed messages here, but I hope you understand the reason for the initial caution, as well as the desire to get as many students back to school as quickly as possible.

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Year 9 students

Nearly all of the students we asked to go home yesterday had been identified as close contacts of the confirmed case in Year 9 and so they will need to continue to self-isolate in line with the letter you were sent if you are a parent/carer of one of those students. You should all by now have had details of how to access work via Microsoft Teams but please contact us if not.

For reasons of time yesterday, all Year 9 students were given the same date for return to school. We are having a closer look at the exact date of each last contact with the confirmed case and will contact you individually before the end of the week if your child can return slightly sooner than the date specified on the letter. After further investigation, a small number will be able to return to school tomorrow.

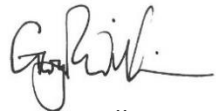
Other issues: all students

Please read this [letter](#) from Mr Johnson regarding important information relating to Microsoft Teams and isolating students.

The Department for Education have asked that we share this [letter](#) with parents that Public Health England have produced which explains when a person requires a coronavirus test and what the symptoms of coronavirus are.

Many thanks again for your support. I suspect it won't be long before I have to write again, but we are at least all starting to adapt to this new world and I expect at least certain aspects will start to become a little more routine and therefore easier to manage

Kind regards



Gwyn Williams
Headteacher

Key Information

Please [click here](#) for the link to the PHE Staying at Home Guidance, relevant if your child does have to self-isolate.

What to do if you develop symptoms of COVID 19

- If you develop symptoms of COVID-19, you should remain at home for at least 10 days from the date when your symptoms appeared, as advised in [government guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection](#)
- You should also arrange for a test as soon as possible. You can arrange for testing by [clicking here](#).
- All other household members must also stay at home and self-isolate for 14 days, unless you receive a negative test in the meantime
- The 14-day period starts from the day when the first person in the house became ill

- If your test comes back negative and nobody else in your household has tested positive, then you can come back to school/work
- If your test comes back positive, you must continue to self-isolate and all household members must also continue to self-isolate **even if they have a negative test**
- When self-isolating, you should not go to work, school, or public areas and exercise should be taken within the home.
- Household members staying at home for 14 days will greatly reduce the overall amount of infection the household could pass on to others in the community
- If you are able to, you can move any vulnerable individuals (such as the elderly and those with underlying health conditions) out of your home, to stay with friends or family for the duration of the home isolation period.

Symptoms of COVID 19

The most common symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are recent onset of:

- new continuous cough and/or
- high temperature and/or
- a loss of, or change in, normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia)

For most people, coronavirus (COVID-19) will be a mild illness.

If you do develop symptoms, you can seek advice from NHS 111 at

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/check-if-you-have-coronavirus-symptoms/> or by phoning 111.

How to stop COVID-19 spreading

There are things you can do to help reduce the risk of you and anyone you live with getting ill with COVID-19

- wash your hands with soap and water often – do this for at least 20 seconds
- use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available
- wash your hands as soon as you get home
- 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

Further information is available at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>