

5<sup>th</sup> October 2021

Dear parents and carers

As we mentioned in the bulletin on Friday, we had seen a significant rise in COVID cases in the previous week and were monitoring the situation carefully.

This rise has continued at a steady rate over the last few days, and we now have a considerable number of students who are currently off school because they have tested positive on either a PCR or lateral flow device test within the last ten days. Most identified cases are in years 7–10, with cases fairly evenly spread across these four year groups. There are only a small number of cases in Year 11 and the 6<sup>th</sup> form. Whilst only a small number of staff are currently away having tested positive, we are starting to see a growing impact on teaching given the number of teachers having to take time off to care for their own younger children who have tested positive.

I have met again with public health and education leaders at Warrington Borough Council and we have agreed, given the number and spread of cases across the school, the temporary reintroduction of face coverings in communal areas is a sensible and proportionate measure. **We expect all students and staff to wear face coverings in indoor communal areas** from tomorrow. For clarity, this does **not** include classrooms. Please note, students should already be wearing face coverings on buses and we would appreciate your support in re-iterating this message. We will also revert to most assemblies being virtual until half-term.

In addition, we ask for your support with the following measures:

1. Please do not send any child into school if they are displaying any of the COVID symptoms, however mild (i.e. a new, continuous cough, high temperature and/or loss of taste or smell). They should stay home and arrange to have a PCR test.
2. Please continue to ensure all students take lateral flow tests every Sunday and Wednesday, even if they are well. These tests are aimed at identifying those cases who do not have symptoms and who may therefore be spreading the virus unknowingly.
3. We also ask that should your child show any broader respiratory symptoms (e.g. headache, fatigue, sore throat, sneezing), please err on the side of caution and ask them to take an additional lateral flow test. Please continue to monitor symptoms, and if they develop any of the three Covid symptoms (i.e. a new, continuous cough, high temperature and/or loss of taste or smell), please ensure that your child self-isolates and arranges to take a PCR test.

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4. If anybody in your household tests positive for COVID, please ensure that:
- Everybody else in the household takes a PCR test as soon as possible
  - Everybody in the household takes a lateral flow test daily, until the 10 day isolation period for the positive case has expired. If any of the daily tests are positive, the individual should self-isolate and book a PCR test.

As mentioned, current numbers are high but we do not seem to be seeing an exponential rise in cases (i.e. numbers are not spiralling out of control). Around seven hundred students aged 12–15 have received the Covid vaccination in school this week, and the vast majority of 6<sup>th</sup> Form students have already been vaccinated. We are hopeful that, given the additional measures we are introducing alongside the vaccine rollout, case numbers should start to come down over the next 2–3 weeks. For this reason, we do not anticipate the additional measures being necessary beyond half-term but we will continue to review the situation.

We are very keen to continue running the school as normally as possible to avoid further disruption to education but it is clear that numbers are too high to ignore at the moment. The measures we are putting in place have been discussed with our local public health team and we believe that these represent a proportionate response at this stage. Unfortunately, Covid has not yet gone away and we must all continue to do what we can to limit the spread of the virus. I would like to thank you in advance for your support.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gwyn Williams', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Gwyn Williams