

Thursday 26th November 2020

Dear Parent / Carer

Coronavirus – recent positive cases and clarification of close-contacts

I wanted to update you further regarding the recent positive cases of individuals from the school. I hope this letter provides you with the best reassurance possible concerning the pandemic and the opening of schools.

As you know, we have a risk assessment in place in order to mitigate against the spread of coronavirus. The main elements of this are:

- Good hand hygiene
- Regular cleaning of frequently touch areas such as chairs, desks, door handles etc.
- Wearing face-masks inside the building and in smaller outside communal areas
- Social distancing where possible

Pupils and students have designated 'bubble areas' outside as well as inside the building (in wet weather). Our timetable has also prioritised pupils and students, where possible, to be taught in rooms close together within their bubble.

The reason for the 'bubbles' is so that if we have several positive cases, we would send home the entire bubble, hoping that other bubbles are not infected. This part of our risk assessment does not guarantee no spreading between bubbles but it does bring down the risk somewhat.

When a pupil, student or member of staff tests positive, I have to carry out a track and trace of all close contacts. A close contact is defined as follows:

- Having spoken face to face within a metre
- Been coughed on
- Having skin-to-skin contact
- Contact within one metre for a minute or longer without face to face contact
- Being within 2 metres for more than 15 minutes
- Travelled in a small vehicle

...with a person who has tested positive

All pupils, students and staff who have been classed as a close-contact because the above occurred within 48 hours of the positive case showing coronavirus symptoms or after if the test had not taken place or the person was asymptomatic are sent home to isolate. This process is time consuming as we need to check seating plans, speak to staff, speak to the pupils/students

and then ring home to inform parents. Yesterday we identified 54 pupils who were sent home to self-isolate for 14 days from when they came into contact with the Covid-19 positive pupil.

As a result of this detailed process, we are able to send only a proportion home and not the entire year group bubble because we are able to confirm the positive case pupil has not had contact with the remainder of the bubble.

Because of our increasing numbers and that we had cases in more than three year groups, we were escalated by the DfE to the London Coronavirus Response Cell of Public Health England (LCRC). I had to provide them with our risk assessment and details of what had happened and how we dealt with the situation.

I am pleased to report that the Doctor I spoke to from LCRC was impressed with the measures we have in place to minimise risk. He explained that the recent cases we have are a reflection of rising cases in the community and not the school, although of course the two are linked. This is therefore a reflection of the increased cases in Havering. As you will already know, Havering has the highest number of cases of any London Borough. Thankfully for us, we have seen low numbers of positive cases compared to many other Havering schools.

The Doctor was confident that we carried out the track and trace process perfectly, enabling the rest of the school to continue with their education while minimising the risk to others by sending the 54 pupils home to self-isolate..

There is no cause for alarm at this stage and I will monitor the situation carefully. If we do see a rapid escalation in cases, that is not representative of the community, I have been asked to contact them for further advice and guidance.

Further advice and guidance can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus/education-and-childcare>

Please make the most of your additional day together this weekend.

Thank you for your continued support.

Best wishes



Mr Darren Luckhurst
Principal

