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BRI/SRU

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Dear Parents, Carers and Students

COVID-19 Update

As we are all very aware, we are now within a new period of National Lockdown, which is aiming to reduce and control the transmission of COVID-19 across the country. The recent trends locally have been a cause for concern and, as I have explained in my recent letters, we have had a small number of cases since October 23 within our school community.

I would like to thank you for your support in helping us to keep our students, staff and wider community as safe as possible by following the guidance and, for those of you who have been in touch, by offering kind words of support for our approach to managing risks whilst doing all we can to optimize conditions for learning and promoting wellbeing.

What follows in the remainder of this letter is a summary of changes we are making to our guidance on keeping safe within this lockdown period, and a reminder about self-isolating and communicating with school in the event that you or a member of your household becomes symptomatic for COVID-19, or receives a positive test result.

Changes to guidance on keeping safe in school

1. The wearing of face coverings in school

In line with new national guidance for the current National Lockdown, we have had to make some small changes to our expectations for wearing face coverings in school. Students who are exempt and currently carry a badge to indicate that they are not expected to wear a face covering will continue to be exempt.

All other students and staff should now wear a face covering in any communal area, except when seated in classrooms, and when eating or drinking. Students should now wear a face covering and continue to avoid particularly close contact:

- On corridors
- In toilet areas
- In dining spaces
- In outside communal social spaces, such as the basketball courts, the tennis courts and the school field.

Safe use of face coverings

It is best practice for individuals to:

- Clean hands before and after touching face coverings when putting them on and taking them off
- Not touch the front of their face covering during use or when removing it
- Store face coverings in small plastic ziplock bags between use
- Not wear a face covering if it becomes damp
- Dispose of temporary face coverings in a waste bin, or place reusable face coverings in a plastic bag they can take home with them to wash between uses

If you are unable to provide your child with a face covering, please contact the Parkside Support Centre.

2. Vulnerable Groups

Individuals who are extremely clinically vulnerable and have a letter from the NHS or their GP advising that they should remain at home should do so and contact the school as soon as possible. Distance learning will then be established, aiming to meet the specific needs of the student. Some students may live with someone who is extremely clinically vulnerable and has had a letter from the NHS or their GP to advise that their entire household should remain at home. Again, this advice should be followed, and as above we ask that you contact the school as soon as possible if this applies to your household/child.

If you want to get in touch to share any other concerns or ask questions, please don't hesitate to do so. We will do all that we can to support you at this difficult time.

A reminder about self-isolating and communicating with school

If a student, or a member of their household develops any of the symptoms of COVID-19, they, their entire household (and if appropriate, support bubble), must self-isolate for a period of 14 days from when symptoms first appeared, or until a negative test result is obtained.

The symptoms of COVID-19 are:

- A high temperature
- A new, continuous cough (coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours)
- A loss of or change to your sense of smell or taste

It is of vital importance that the school is informed immediately of any students who receive a positive test result. Any delays in communicating this to us will delay our actions to identify and isolate any close contacts of students who have contracted the virus, making it more likely to spread within our community.

Guidance on what to do if your child develops symptoms of COVID 19 is included after this letter.

These are undoubtedly challenging times for all of us. We will continue to work tirelessly to support students and their families to the best of our ability, and will continue to keep parents, carers and students informed of developments within our community.

We are extremely grateful for your continued support with our efforts to keep our school community as safe as possible during these challenging times.

Take care and best wishes

Mr B Riggott
Headteacher

What to do if your child develops symptoms of COVID 19

If your child develops symptoms of COVID-19, they must not come to school and should remain at home for at least **10 days** from the date when their symptoms appeared. Anyone with symptoms will be eligible for testing and this can be arranged via <https://www.nhs.uk/ask-for-a-coronavirus-test> or by calling 119.

All other household members who remain well, must stay at home and not leave the house for 14 days. This includes anyone in your 'Support Bubble'.

Further information is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

The 14-day period starts from the day when the first person in the house became ill.

Household members should not go to work, school or public areas and exercise should be taken within the home.

If you require help with buying groceries, other shopping or picking up medication, or walking a dog, you should ask friends or family. Alternatively, you can order your shopping online and medication by phone or online.

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, 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

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

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

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

If your child does develop symptoms, you can seek advice from the nhs.uk website at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/check-if-you-have-coronavirus-symptoms/>. If you are concerned about your child's symptoms, or they are worsening you can seek advice from NHS 111 at <https://111.nhs.uk/> 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

Do

- 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

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