

25th November 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

As many of you will have heard, Covid levels continue to creep up within most schools, with many experiencing quite difficult situations. So far, we have been very fortunate in that the levels seen have not been high amongst staff or students, but there is no doubt that as we enter the winter months things will become more challenging. My purpose in writing is to provide you with an update on how things are going here at school, and to request your continued help and support with some of the key protective measures.

As things stand, we do have a small number of students that have tested positive for Covid in each year group, as well as a number of staff. As you will know from previous communications, the NHS Test and Trace service now have responsibility for reviewing each case to identify close contacts and notify them. If they do get in touch, they will ask that your child book in for a PCR test to check that they are okay – please help us as a school community by booking this as soon as you are able.

We do receive a number of requests from parents asking for us to identify or confirm whether a particular person has tested positive for Covid. Please understand that we are never able to give out this information – this is not us being difficult, but rather a requirement that all schools maintain confidentiality and privacy.

In addition to the work of the Test and Trace service, here at the school we look closely at each case to see if it could be linked to any others that might have arisen in school – this is so we can see if any cross-infection is taking place within our community. Schools operate under tight thresholds and if we detect that there is evidence of levels of cross-infection occurring within school we are required to notify Public Health England for further guidance. To date we have not been in this situation, but if it should occur, I will of course notify you.

Whilst the current guidance from the Department for Education states that students should not need to wear face masks in schools, the SW Directors for Public Health (there is one for each local authority) have collectively requested that schools ask their students to wear them whenever they are part of a large gathering made up of different year groups. We have decided to be slightly more stringent than this and err on the side of caution by stopping all such large gatherings involving different year groups (e.g. assemblies). Obviously when larger numbers do come together, such as when queuing for food in the Dining Hall, they are wearing masks, and we are doing the same whenever there are larger gatherings of students from the same year group. We are also maintaining all of our other protective measures and have recently started to look more closely at our ventilation in and around classrooms through the use of CO2 monitors.

My key request to each of you at this time relates to regular Covid testing of students. This plays an important part in screening out any cases where the person is asymptomatic, and therefore likely to be unaware. Each week we get anonymised information from the NHS about the level of testing taking place

amongst the school community and we have recently noticed a significant drop off in the level of testing taking place. This might be simply because although students are still testing, they are choosing/forgetting to record their test results, however, it could be the case that they are not actually taking the tests. All I would ask is that you do all you can to encourage your children to take part in the twice weekly testing so we can do all we can to stop Covid coming into school and causing the scale of disruption we saw this time last year.

Please note, that if your child does show any of the Covid symptoms, the advice is that they be immediately booked for a PCR Test and do not attend school until the results come through.

Finally, one or two parents have enquired about the Tutor/Parents Evening on 30th November and whether or not we will be able to hold this given the current Covid situation. Having carefully reviewed this event we do feel able to safely hold it, as parents/carers only come on site for their appointment with the tutor and then leave, so the number of people that are actually in school at any one time is quite small. We would, however, remind you to wear your mask when you come in on that day unless you are exempt from wearing one – this is for your own, and staff, protection.

I will provide a further update nearer the end of term, unless the situation changes significantly before then, in which case we will get in touch with you straight away.

Best wishes,



Alan Blackburn
Headteacher