

Dear Parent/ Carer

At 4.30pm On Wednesday 16th September we were notified that a member of our school community had just received a positive test result for covid-19. I would like to take this opportunity to explain the actions taken as a result.

We immediately began to identify all 'close contacts'. A close contact is defined as anyone who has been within a meter of the infected person or two meters for fifteen minutes or more from two days before the positive test was taken.

We contacted Public Health England and the Local Health Protection Team immediately and received further advice from them at 5.30pm.

By 10.30pm had identified most students and staff who had been 'close contacts' and also those within each classroom. To take a 'belt and braces' approach we decided to ask all students in the classrooms identified to isolate.

As we knew it would be difficult to contact parents of students who had been close contacts so late in the evening, and to allow us to ensure the accuracy of our close contacts lists through double checking seating plans with classroom teachers and checking that students had attended on the identified days, we took the decision to ask all year 7, 10 and 11 students to isolate on Thursday 17th September.

Once the list of close contacts had been checked, we began, with reduced staffing in school, to try to contact every parent of students in years 7, 10 and 11. This was a mammoth task, there were approximately seven hundred calls to make. Frustratingly, some numbers held on our system were incorrect which prevented us making contact. To rectify this we will, as we do every year, shortly send out a contact sheet to all parents. Could I please ask that you ensure this is completed and returned to the academy to allow us to contact you in the event of such an emergency?

We followed up phone calls with text messages to all parents and letters to all parents of students required to isolate.

Whilst this was occurring, by Thursday afternoon, we were able to set up live streaming of lessons to students who were isolating. We had begun to develop this system in case of such an emergency. It is still early days, however we know that many students who could not come into school accessed this on both Thursday and Friday. Live streamed lessons have teachers teaching students real lessons online from 8.25am each day for a full curriculum and this will continue until all students return to school. We appreciate that our year 7 students have not all yet had training to access Google classroom. We had begun this training but not completed it. Well done to all year 7 students who watched the online tutorials and then accessed lessons!

Within the academy we deep clean all classrooms every evening. We have a one way system in place, separate lunch and break times for all year groups, screens in lessons to separate teachers and students, cleaning systems in the dining room and toilets to ensure they are cleaned between year groups using them. We have new outdoor sinks for hand washing, hand sanitiser and disinfectant spray in all classrooms, systems to separate year groups before and after school and a full risk assessment in place which can be viewed on our website. We know that we are taking every precaution possible to maintain a safe environment for students and staff. I would appreciate your support in providing your son/ daughter with a mask to wear at social times and in the school corridors please as an added safety measure.

I have been informed by the Local Authority Stronger Communities Coordinator that students are not social distancing or wearing masks as they travel home after school. Can I please also ask that you remind your son/ daughter of the importance of social distancing, especially from students in other year groups and members of the community as much as possible?

We are committed to providing our students with the very best teaching and learning experiences. It is our opinion that teacher assessment will not be used to assign grades to students this academic year and exams will take place for all year groups in the future. We also know that we have a great deal of curriculum to catch up with. We will endeavour to deliver the very best lessons possible on-line to students isolating whilst also continuing to provide the best experiences within school too.

Lastly, I am always in awe of the way in which both students and staff within the academy immediately adapt to ensure that the very best learning continues even in the toughest of circumstances. I would also like to thank you for the support you have given to the academy in one of the toughest of weeks for us all.

Yours faithfully,

Mrs J. Gaunt
Principal