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Dear Parent or Carer

We are writing to you to update you on how things are going following the re-opening of our schools this term. Things have moved on considerably since we sent an update last month. You will be aware that cases of Covid-19 are rising nationally and locally; we are continuing to review and develop our procedures to try to keep students and staff as safe as possible, to minimise disruption when cases arise and to provide as much continuity of learning as possible when students are at home.

In school

All our new procedures are now well-embedded, and we are very grateful to parents, students and staff for the way they have adapted to such new ways of working. Attendance has been good throughout this half term; lessons have been purposeful and student behaviour around our sites has been good. As we were required to move to asking for face-coverings to be worn in public areas in secondary schools, students have responded with good grace and common sense.

Increasing cases

When we wrote to you in September we said: “looking at what is already happening across the country and locally, we would be foolish not to be concerned about the risks and challenges schools face in staying fully open; it is really important that we are honest and open with you about those challenges.”

Although 3 of our school communities have not yet received any positive tests, the other 3 school communities have. On all occasions we have worked closely with The Department for Education and Public Health England to manage those cases. Our priorities are to prevent any spread of Covid-19 in school and to minimise disruption to learning for students as far as we can. We will, however, always be guided by expert public health advice.

As soon as we receive notification of a positive case, we contact the DfE and PHE for advice. We then work closely with the person or family to establish any close contacts. The measures we have put into place in schools has meant that we have been able to identify contacts quickly and avoid, where possible, widespread disruption. Where a whole bubble or year group is asked to stay at home, we do this until we can establish the extent of contacts and then bring back as many students as possible as we safely can. Please be assured that if you hear of a positive case, you will hear directly from us if it affects your son/daughter. We will continue to do our very best to keep you as fully informed as possible.

Symptoms and testing

We continue to appreciate the difficulties parents face if their child is unwell as we are right in the middle of the autumn cold season. As a rule, children can come to school as long as they don't have any one of the three symptoms the NHS regard as the most common Coronavirus symptoms:

- New continuous cough



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- High temperature
- Loss of taste or smell.

If your child has the above symptoms they should isolate at home (along with the rest of the household) in line with government guidance. You should seek to get a test, and although the situation seems to be improving locally, we do recognise that this is not always easy.

If a child becomes unwell at school with any of the 3 symptoms above, they will need to go home and follow the advice above.

What happens if students are required to stay at home?

In the event that a student is isolating at home, if they are well enough to do schoolwork, it will be available remotely. The school will provide details of how that will work. In the event that a whole class is at home, we can now deliver “live” teaching remotely at the same time as the timetabled lesson in school. Where a student does not have access to an appropriate device at home (or broadband) we will loan the appropriate technology to them. We will shortly send home our new guidelines for remote learning which will help to ensure things run smoothly. In the event that a student is at home but it is not the whole class, students will continue to access “on demand” learning where the resources and explanatory videos are provided via the Teams or Google Classroom platform.

Catch Up

We told you in the summer term that we would prioritise settling students back in, making our schools safe and developing our online platforms further this half term. We are pleased with how this has gone so next term we will be ready to launch “catch up” sessions after school for key year groups and to make the National Tutor Programme available to students who need extra catch up in any year group. Further information about these programmes will be with you soon.

Wishing you and your families all the very best and thank you for your continued support.

Yours faithfully

Jonny Uttley
CEO

Scott Ratheram
Executive Principal



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