



5 November 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian

National COVID Restrictions (Lockdown 2)

Today marks the second period of national restrictions or “Lockdown 2” as it has become commonly known. The national restrictions will remain in place from 5 November 2020 to 2 December 2020.

I have not written to you before now with further information about how this impacts school as we were awaiting promised guidance from the government. As has now become traditional, the guidance was shared with schools late yesterday afternoon. In recognition of the lack of time given by the government to implement, the Department for Education has asked schools to have any change of measure in place by **Monday 9 November**.

The full guidance to schools during national restrictions can be read [here](#) and a summary press release from the Secretary of State can be read [here](#). The guidance should be read in conjunction with the general guidance to schools about operating during the pandemic and this can be found [here](#).

Schools remaining open

During national restrictions, the school will continue to remain open to all of our students.

The government scientific advisors maintain that:

“the risk to children themselves of becoming severely ill from coronavirus (COVID-19) is very low and there are negative health impacts of being out of school. For the vast majority of children, the benefits of being back in the classroom far outweigh the low risk from coronavirus (COVID-19) and schools can take action to reduce risks still further.”

We will continue to implement the vast majority of the measures outlined in our planning and Risk Assessment which can be found on our website [here](#).

Whilst it is the government’s ambition for schools to remain fully open to all year groups, we continue to be subject to potential partial or full closure due to COVID-19 positive cases in the school community, or if staffing levels drop to a point at which it becomes unsustainable to operate a full school. Whilst we do not want to move to this position, I think it is highly likely that this will happen sooner or later. The detail of what we would do in this instance was set out in my letter to you on 18 September named ‘contingency planning for school closures and remote learning’ [here](#). If we are forced to move to a rota system we will try to give parents as much notice as possible. I should also add that staff have been working very hard to develop our practice in terms of live lessons if students are having to learn from home.

Children who are Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (‘CEV’)

The National Restrictions guidance makes it clear that students who are CEV should not attend school during the lockdown. Students in this category will be provided with online work as per our online learning support programme, via Google Classroom. Parents of students who believe their child is CEV are advised to speak to their child’s GP or specialist clinician, to understand whether their child should still be classed as clinically extremely vulnerable. If they are confirmed to be in this category, then evidence will need to be

provided to the school. Parents of clinically extremely vulnerable children will be receiving a letter shortly from their GP/NHS confirming this advice.

Students who live with someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable, but who are not clinically extremely vulnerable themselves, should still attend school.

Students with other medical conditions

If your child is not clinically extremely vulnerable but has an underlying medical condition which you feel puts them at increased risk, we would urge you to discuss this with a medical professional. Please let us know if you are provided with any specific medical advice for your child to be in school so that we can discuss this with you. The expectation is that all students will attend school.

Extra-curricular activities

The National Restrictions guidance is clear that extra-curricular clubs, teams and activities are not permitted during lock down apart from those which provide wraparound care and allow parents to go to work. We had hoped to re-open homework club this month, however due to the guidance, this will be postponed until after lockdown. We will be continuing to offer our excellent breakfast club as this does fulfil the wraparound care criteria.

We are working with Berkshire Maestros to clarify guidance relating to instrument lessons. For now, these will be suspended, however if guidance is amended to allow music lessons to continue, then we will reinstate them immediately.

After school rehearsals or practical activities that are specifically linked to curriculum requirements (e.g. GCSE drama devised performance rehearsals or GCSE PE practical's) will continue to run, as will our catch-up tutoring intervention programme (Mrs Gibbs will be writing to you about this imminently). We consider these intrinsic parts of our curriculum offer.

Face coverings

All schools now have to implement students and staff wearing face coverings in corridors and communal areas. This is a measure which you will be aware, we have already implemented. Whilst the vast majority of our students have been very diligent in following the school's instructions about the wearing of masks, we have had a small number of instances of students persistently arriving to school without a mask. Please could I ask parents to support this safety measure which is now mandated by the government.

As a reminder:

- All students must wear a face covering whilst using public transport (this is the law);
- All student must bring to school and wear appropriately (covering nose and mouth) a plain face covering. This will now be considered a part of school uniform. If a student fails to wear a mask or wear it appropriately, then it will be treated as a uniform infraction and students will receive sanctions as per our behaviour policy;
- If a student forgets a mask, school will provide one and a charge of £1 will be made via ParentPay;
- If a student repeatedly forgets a mask, we will be asking parents to come to school to either provide or purchase a mask before their child can attend lessons.

The wearing of masks and how non-compliance will be treated has now been written into to our amended behaviour policy, which can be found on our website [here](#).

Ventilation and clothing

The latest guidance has reinforced the need for school to maximise ventilation in classrooms as this has a mitigating effect on the spread of coronavirus. In practice, this means that we will be leaving doors and windows open and fully utilising our air circulatory system. As we move into the colder months of the year, we are conscious of students being comfortable at school and not too cold. In addition to the school's heating system being on, we are introducing a number of temporary adjustments to our uniform policy.

From Monday morning (9 November):

- Students will be permitted to wear an additional plain jumper underneath their blazer. This should NOT be a "hoodie" style top and should be in the school uniform colours as far as possible;
- Students are encouraged to wear a vest;
- Students are encouraged to wear thicker tights and wear socks with tights (dark colours please);
- If students have PE, they should still attend school in their PE kit (with their blazer over their t-shirt) and may wear plain tracksuit bottoms. Students may also wear dark leggings with shorts if they have PE.

Students should continue to put their coats, scarves and gloves into their lockers during the school day.

As the winter rolls on, we will review this position and adjust if necessary.

Visiting School

Our current advice position that unless absolutely necessary, parents should contact the school by email or by phone. Parents should only come to the school building if they have been invited to do so by a member of staff. Meetings with parents are sometimes necessary to support students and we will continue with these.

Positive cases of COVID-19 within the school community

As you are aware, we have received 4 notifications of positive cases within our school community and we have not been required to take any further action in respect of these cases. We generally do not share much information about individual cases to protect the anonymity of the student affected, however I would like to further explain the actions we take on receiving notification of a positive case and explain why we have not been required to take any further action.

Each time we are notified of a positive case, we are required to contact the Department for Education. They ensure that they have a record of the positive test result for contact tracing purposes and advise us on any further actions that we are required to take. In determining the level of action required, they consider:

- The direct contact that the student has had within the school over a period of 48 hours either before the onset of symptoms or before the date and time of the test if no symptoms were displayed. This is considered the 'infectious period';
- 'Direct contact' is determined as contact of over 15 minutes within a 2m distance;
- Whether other positive cases have been notified to the school within a 14 day period.

On all of the occasions that we have been notified of a positive result, the students have not been in school over the infectious period. The two most recent cases developed over the half term holiday. This means that the risk of transmission to anybody within the school is very low and that no further action is advised. As stated in our risk assessment, we have chosen to notify staff and parents of all positive cases to be fully transparent. I would like to reassure you that we are following all of the DfE guidance and that we take positive cases in the school community very seriously.

Thank you for your continued support during this difficult period. We continue to be very pleased with the learning and progress that our students are making, despite our current challenges. Please do not hesitate to get in contact with us if you have further questions.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mr A Johnson', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Mr A Johnson
Headteacher