

27th September 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

I would like to thank you for your support during the past week when we encountered our first positive coronavirus test result from a student. It was pleasing that we were able to manage it with minimal disruption whilst also following all government and Public Health guidelines to maintain safety.

We were aware this was unlikely to be the only instance we would face and thus it is not with huge surprise that I now write to you with news that another student, this time in the Year 11 year group bubble has tested positive. This follows an alert through NHS test and trace following his contact with a student at another school.

You will be aware that our response to the situation last week was to ask the entire year group bubble to remain at home to enable us to carry out the investigation to determine who should not be in school. We will follow the same approach today and have thus asked all of Year 11 to remain at home tomorrow, Monday 28th September.

It may be helpful to you to be aware of the procedure we need to follow:

To identify those who needed to self-isolate we conducted a process not unlike "test and trace." We need to speak to the student concerned to identify their friendship group. We also need to liaise with all their teachers to find out where they sit in their classes and who is close to them. Using this information, we will with Public Health England (PHE) to determine with whom they had "close contact". We are using the PHE definition of close contact which is:

- people who spend significant time in the same household as a person who has tested positive for COVID-19
- a person who has had face-to-face contact (within one metre), with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, including:
 - being coughed on
 - having a face-to-face conversation within one metre
 - having skin-to-skin physical contact, or
 - contact within one metre for one minute or longer without face-to-face contact
- a person who has been within 2 metres of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 for more than 15 minutes
- a person who has travelled in a small vehicle with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 or in a large vehicle or plane near someone who has tested positive for COVID-19

From this process we will identify the students who will be asked to stay at home until 14 days from their last potential contact with the affected student had elapsed. The others in the year group will return to school. Those who do need to self-isolate will be reminded to access Google Classrooms, so they could follow the work their classmates are completing at school.

Highgate Wood School Student Council supports individual action to address the issues of Climate Change and promotes the United Nations top 10 recommendations.



5-minute showers



Drive less



Lights off



Local produce



Recycle



Meat-free meals



Zero-waste fashion



Unplug



Refill and reuse



Bring your own bag

We will be putting more information on the school website so you can keep up to date with this evolving picture. I would like to remind you that for most people, coronavirus (COVID-19) will be a mild illness and that you should not attempt to book a Covid-19 test for anyone in your household unless they develop one (or more) of the following Covid-19 symptoms – a new, continuous cough; a high temperature and/or a loss, or a change in, their normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia). I would also like to assure you that we are doing everything we can at Highgate Wood School to maintain a safe, enjoyable and effective learning environment for all.

In other aspects of current school life, I would like again to draw your attention to the ImpactEd survey which we will be asking students to complete during the coming week. I would also ask that you to look out for a communication from Mr Ashman regarding online safety. We have been alerted to a number of areas of concern and he is currently assembling some guidance for parents and carers that should help address these issues.

I would also like to ask any families of year 7 children who drop them off in the morning and pick them up in the afternoon at the Montenotte Road entrance to please avoid driving down to the gate. We have had a number of situations recently with vehicles attempting three point turns right outside of the school entrance. Apart from the congestion that this causes, we are even more concerned about the risk to the safety of students and staff as they walk into school or leave in large numbers, often crossing the road at that point. We ask that you turn into Glasslyn Road to do your drop off and pick up from there.

In these Covid times, the other issue that I wanted to raise was that of punctuality to school. As you will know, we are staggering start and finish times for students so as to maintain the year group bubbles. Late arrivals compromise this as students can end up arriving when other year groups are due to arrive. We also collect all students from the playground to go to their morning lessons, so late arrival makes this process much more challenging. As a reminder, students in years 7, 8 and 9 are collected from their arrival point at 8.25am, so ideally should arrive at least five minutes before then. Students in years 10 and 11 are collected in the playground at 8.40am, so should arrive at least five minutes prior to that.

We are continuing to look at ways that we can adapt things to make the Highgate Wood School experience even better during these challenging times. As I have mentioned before, we are looking at ways to improve arrangement for pastoral care through the tutor group system. We are now also exploring possibilities for more video communications between home and school, and investigating other ways in which we can enhance our provision for the students. I will provide more information on these once the plans are more developed.

Lastly, I would like to thank all of our students and staff for what has been a very positive (if not challenging) start to the term. We feel that all students from year 7 to post 16 have settled well and are working hard. This illustrates the need clearly to try to maintain the provision that schools make and just how valuable it is to our young people.

With thanks for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,



Patrick Cozier
Headteacher