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Dear Parent,

I hope that you are well and that your children are enjoying being back at College in something resembling normal life. With the welcome return of all our pupils and staff, it is inevitable that some of them will become unwell at some point. Unfortunately, some of the usual seasonal ailments do have symptoms that may resemble those of Covid-19 and would therefore meet the criteria for self-isolating and getting tested. Although most will have nothing to do with Covid-19, we need to be certain.

We have been in contact with Public Health and they have given us some advice on what would happen if a pupil, day or boarding, has Covid-19 symptoms, or actually gets Covid-19. I thought it best to share this with you, so that you can see how this will affect both you and your children.

Day Pupil with Covid-19 symptoms

If the outcome of our medical assessment, (based on the NHS symptom checker), is to self-isolate then this is what would happen. If a day pupil was to have symptoms, we would isolate the pupil until arrangements could be made for the parents to come and collect their child, to take them home and self-isolate as a family. They would need to arrange a test.

Who would isolate

If this test proves positive then, according to current advice from Public Health, all students who had been within 2 metres, (not just in passing), of the student would have to self-isolate for 14 days. This group could consist of a whole class, or some pupils from a number of different classes. For those pupils who have been in close contact, only they would need to self-isolate and not their families. If the test is negative and everyone remains well, then they can return to school.

A Boarder with Covid-19 symptoms

If the outcome of our medical assessment (based on the NHS symptom checker) is to self-isolate then this is what would happen. If the boarder was to remain in school then, in consultation with their parents, a postal Covid-19 test would be arranged. If parents were to come and collect their child, they would then all need to self-isolate as a family. If a boarder does test positive for Covid-19, again public health will be contacted.



House self-isolation

The likely outcome of this is that the House bubble will need to self-isolate for 14 days. Should someone develop COVID-19 symptoms late in the 14-day household isolation period, (for example, on day 10 or later), the isolation period for the rest of the household does not need to be extended. However, staff are not part of this bubble and will not need to self-isolate. They will be allowed to supervise the House, albeit with reduced contact. Staff will be allowed to go into House as necessary.

Who else would isolate

In addition, all students, (e.g. from lessons), who had been within 2 metres of the student would have to self-isolate. We would then arrange for all meals to be taken to House. We already have some experience of this as we did have pupils quarantining with us so they were ready for the start of term. Any pupils in self-isolation can return home to isolate with their parents, or in their own House, (no one else in this different House would need to self-isolate).

Other illnesses and attending school

At the start of term we asked parents to keep pupils at home if they were ill, (regardless of Covid-19). If pupils in House are under the weather, they will remain in House for the same reasons. These pupils are not self-isolating, so can move around. They would be allowed to go to the dining hall towards the end of the serving times and just be asked to keep away from others. If they are ill and would normally go to sickbay, then they would.

On line lessons

If pupils are having to self-isolate, then teaching will be on line through a combination of TEAMS and Frog. It will not mirror the working day, as lessons will be continuing in classrooms. Clearly, as Public Health gains more experience, then their advice may change, for instance, self-isolation may be recommended at an earlier stage.

It has been really pleasing to see how the College community has responded to the challenges of adapting to the necessary changes in life as a result of the pandemic and despite the irritation of occasional mask wearing – and we do understand that it is an irritation – have adapted and kept their good humour.

Yours sincerely

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