



THOMAS MILLS HIGH SCHOOL

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Dear Parents

25th March 2021

Headteacher's Update 2020/2021 – Letter 24 (of 24)

I had planned to write a more general letter as this term comes to an end but as you will see the LFD testing at home has led to a need for the school to work with the authorities as we manage a situation. As ever, we are having to balance the quality of education with the safety considerations.

Report of a Positive LFD Test Result

We were advised by a family that there had been a positive LFD test result (test taken at home) and they had already undertaken the right actions around self-isolation and booking a PCR test. Senior colleagues were able to undertake the contact tracing, inform the authorities and as a result, a small number of Sixth Form students have had to work from home today (and separate correspondence will be issued to those students).

The wider authorities remind us that this is an opportunity to reinforce key points about coronavirus.

If you or a child develop symptoms of Coronavirus

If your child develops symptoms of COVID-19, they must not come to school and should remain at home for at least 10 days from the date when their symptoms appeared. Anyone with symptoms will be eligible for a PCR test (the normally available test type) and this can be arranged via <https://www.nhs.uk/ask-for-a-coronavirus-test> or by calling 119.

All other household members who remain well, must stay at home and not leave the house for 10 days. This includes anyone in your 'Support Bubble'.

Further information is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

The household isolation period includes the day the first person in your household's symptoms started (or the day their test was taken if they did not have symptoms) and the next 10 full days. This means that if, for example, your 10 day isolation period starts on the 15th of the month, your isolation period ends at 23:59 hrs on the 25th and you can return to your normal routine.

Household members should not go to work, school or public areas and exercise should be taken within the home.

This, of course, leads to a reminder about the **most common symptoms:**

- a new continuous cough
- a high temperature
- a loss of, or change in, your normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia)



Finally, the authorities suggest that we remind everyone about **how to reduce the spread of coronavirus** which is to:

- *wash your hands with soap and water often – do this for at least 20 seconds*
- *use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available*
- *wash your hands as soon as you get home*
- *cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze*
- *put used tissues in the bin immediately and wash your hands afterwards*

Contact Tracing over the Easter Holidays

The scenario above reminds us that the school will need to continue to undertake a role in contact tracing for the first part of the Easter Holiday.

Staff, students, and parents only need to inform the school of a positive case where they developed symptoms within 48 hours of being in the education setting. You must use the inmail@thomasmills.suffolk.sch.uk contact address. This email will be checked and, as appropriate, senior staff alerted.

If staff or students test positive for coronavirus during the holidays, having developed symptoms more than 48 hours since being in the school, you are not required to take any action in terms of contacting us. NHS Test and Trace will take the lead.

The Department for Education announced recently that staff do not need to be available for contact tracing duties beyond the first 6 days of the Easter Holidays. This means that after Thursday 1st April, we will significantly reduce the checking of correspondence so that staff can have a break.

If staff or students do need to self-isolate due to contact with a positive case during the holidays, we will not need to be informed about this until the first day of the Summer Term.

Summary

I had envisaged that this letter would be briefer and a chance to thank you all for your efforts and support this term: we've entered and returned from lockdown; and engaged positively with remote learning and then face to face education. Everyone has combined the 'extraordinary' whilst doing their utmost to maintain the 'ordinary.' My thanks to you all.

I hope you have seen the most recent edition of the school's termly magazine "Outlook" which captures many achievements and just the amazing community that we have here.

I very much hope that you all have an enjoyable Easter Break and, all being well, we look forward to the return of students and staff on Monday 12th April.

Yours sincerely



P J Hurst
Headteacher