



THOMAS MILLS HIGH SCHOOL

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Dear Parents

11th December 2020

Headteacher's Update 2020/2021 – Letter 11 (of 11)

Earlier this morning we were made aware of a positive case in Year Eleven (the pupil is currently at home). We contacted the Department for Education as well as the County Council and the required work on contact tracing within school began. The contact tracing is quite a broad brush and by its nature captured a fair proportion of our Year Eleven students.

It will need to be borne in mind that the student has a right to confidentiality, and it is not necessary for any family to undertake their own contact tracing or to discuss specific details on social media.

As we have seen in the news there is a risk of increased exposure in secondary schools at the moment. From our point of view, the inclement weather has meant that more students are inside at breaktimes and this increases risks in terms of exposure to more people and challenges to ventilation as well as social distancing. Students have been kept to the pastoral bubbles in buildings at this time.

As a precautionary measure, for Year 11, today will be their last day in school. Our expectation is that teachers will deliver remote learning from Monday to Wednesday next week with additional work being set as required. On Thursday we will look to explore some online contact time with tutors, but other aspects of our day will not be online until later (including the Christmas Concert).

This approach has been discussed with the County Council link who also thought that sending all of year group home and erring on the side of caution was a good approach. Not only does this limit the potential spread in school, it also allows for adequate self-isolation before the Christmas period. (Although the standard letter refers to 14 days, I understand from the news that the Government is due to announce a change of 10 days – however, this will need to be checked from official sources.)

This is not the end of term that I envisaged but we feel it is better to take the most sensible, safe approach not only in terms of risk but also the quality of education. At this stage, the school is open to all other year groups.

As you can see, we are working with the authorities and this letter will have informed you of the current situation. The standard letters from the Department for Education re-iterate that for most people “coronavirus (COVID-19) will be a mild illness.”

Year 11 will also be issued with a separate letter entitled 11a.

The remainder of this letter is directly from the Department for Education's standard letter.

What to do if your child develops symptoms of COVID 19

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 testing 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 14 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 14-day period starts from the day when the first person in the house became ill.

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

If you require help with buying groceries, other shopping or picking up medication, or walking a dog, you should ask friends or family. Alternatively, you can order your shopping online and medication by phone or online.

Household members staying at home for 14 days will greatly reduce the overall amount of infection the household could pass on to others in the community

If you are able, move any vulnerable individuals (such as the elderly and those with underlying health conditions) out of your home, to stay with friends or family for the duration of the home isolation period.

Symptoms

The most common symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are recent onset of:

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

For most people, coronavirus (COVID-19) will be a mild illness.

If your child does develop symptoms, you can seek advice from the nhs.uk website at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/check-if-you-have-coronavirus-symptoms/>. If you are concerned about your child's symptoms, or they are worsening you can seek advice from NHS 111 at <https://111.nhs.uk/> or by phoning 111.

How to stop COVID-19 spreading

There are things you can do to help reduce the risk of you and anyone you live with getting ill with COVID-19

Do

- 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

Further Information

Further information is available at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Yours sincerely



P J Hurst
Headteacher