

Dear Parent/Carer

I am writing to thank you for your continued support over the past week, particularly to those parents whom have had children self-isolating due to positive cases in school. Please also thank your children who have accessed over 1495 remote learning sessions via Microsoft Teams in addition to paper-based work.

I wanted to share with you an overview of the actions we have taken as a school in response to our first cases of the virus. The letters we send out to you following a positive case are the required templates from Public Health England and so do not always capture the rationale behind the decisions that are taken. As parents, we want you to be aware of the processes we have in place so you can better understand them. I have listed some Frequently Asked Questions below:

### **How do we decide what to do when there is a positive case in the school?**

When we are notified of a positive case in the school community we have a strict protocol to follow which has been issued by Coventry Local Authority and Public Health England. This same process is followed by all Coventry schools and the decisions taken are under direction from these bodies. A single case is reported to the Department for Education Coronavirus Hotline and Coventry Local Authority who liaise with Public Health England for Coventry and Warwickshire. Two or more cases (occurring simultaneously) are reported to the Regional Health Protection Team in Public Health England and Coventry Local Authority who also liaise with Public Health England.

### **What information do we collect for each case to decide who needs to self-isolate?**

We collect a variety of information such as, whether the person who tested positive is displaying symptoms and if so, the date of the onset of the symptoms (if known); household details and symptoms including siblings; the dates that the person who tested positive was in attendance at school so that we can identify if the person was infectious whilst on site; date of test, method of testing (postal tests take longer) and date of the result; the seating plan for all lessons and the timetable for the person who has tested positive (this helps to support identification of close contacts with that person); records of any definite face to face contact with the individual by others in the school and details of their friendship group, interactions outside of lessons e.g. social time, teacher meetings, music lessons, intervention sessions; mode of transport to school. On the basis of this information we are then directed by the appropriate bodies regarding the number of children required to self-isolate.

### **Why are some children self-isolating for a different number of days than others?**

Each case is assessed individually based upon the information provided above. The guidance given by the DfE hotline/Coventry Local Authority/Public Health England is always in line with the Government Policy for Track and Trace which can be read here <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-how-it-works>. As a school we are required to track and trace close contacts 48 hours prior to the onset of symptoms. Consequently, weekends can play a significant part in the impact on school, as symptom onset on a Monday, has 48 hours prior as the weekend, compared to a Wednesday or later which has 48 hours prior which dictates 2 days of school tracking and therefore increases the number required to self-isolate. In both our Year 7 and 10 cases, 14 days self-isolation was applied but the days remaining from the onset of symptoms and the child's last day last in school were different. The length of time between the child last being in school symptomatic and the result of the positive test, especially if it is delayed, means that part of the period of self-isolation has already passed. Therefore the time out of school is different although the same rules have been applied.

In the Year 8 case there were delays in testing and other complicating factors which meant we were directed to apply a "circuit break" of 2 weeks for all Year 8 students with immediate effect. This was to ensure there was not an outbreak in the school. This also impacted some Year 12 students due to a sibling case, although to a lesser degree, due to the nature of sixth form study blocks and off-site study periods.

In the other two cases, The Local Authority and Public Health England directed self-isolation for close contacts for 14 days from the onset of symptoms of the child who tested positive and from the last day they were in school symptomatic.

We have not had a case in Years 9, 11 or 13 or any linked cases within school.

I hope that this clarifies the actions we have taken over the past week all under the direction of Public Health England, the Local Authority and the Department for Education.

Thank you for your on-going support.

**Mrs V Shelley**  
**Headteacher**