



13 November 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

Re: Update COVID-19

I am writing to give you an update to my letter of 23 October 2020. Also, I want to let you know that we continue to review our systems and processes to look at ways to improve and respond to changes that may occur locally and nationally. I appreciate that on occasions the information that I present may at times appear contradictory from other letters I have sent especially when relaying information from the DfE and Public Health England regarding actions in response to COVID-19. Also, I understand that the messages given nationally appear to contradict each other with rules allowing contact in some circumstances but not in others. As I have stated before, we are working hard to maintain our established COVID-19 Secure environment which has been inspected by a representative from the Health and Safety Executive with no recommendations made.

Implementation of protective measures

In planning for full reopening of school in September we followed the advice and guidance from the DfE to ensure we comply with the protective measures which are:

- To advise anyone with symptoms of COVID-19 to not attend school
- Wear a face covering in school
- Clean hands regularly
- Ensure good respiratory hygiene by providing tissues
- Introduce enhanced cleaning
- Minimise contact and have in place social distancing where possible
- Keep occupied spaces ventilated

These protective measures have been in place since reopening in September and remain in place

Dealing with a case of COVID-19 at school

I wish to explain the process that we have been advised to take by Public Health England and the information from the DfE's Coronavirus Helpline to attempt to clarify the reasons for actions being taken in response to a notification of a positive case of COVID-19. I will explain cases that have happened recently.

On Thursday 12 November 2020, I was notified that a single pupil in Year 7 and a single pupil in Year 10 had tested positive for COVID-19. Both pupils were in school on the morning of 6 November 2020 at which time they began to have symptoms of COVID-19. A parent had shown symptoms earlier in the week and had a test for COVID-19 with the result being that it was a positive test returned on Friday 6 November 2020.

The guidance to schools has always been and remains that action should only be taken when a positive test for COVID-19 is confirmed. The rules are that anyone in a household who has symptoms of COVID-19 should self-isolate along with the household for fourteen days. If the original person who has symptoms tests positive, then they must remain in isolation for a further ten days from the point of having symptoms.

Using the example from Friday 6 November 2020, both pupils went home after registration period. We are advised that we must trace contacts for the forty-eight-hour period before last contact when symptoms started – which in this case was the morning of 6 November 2020. Therefore, we had to look at contacts for Wednesday 4 and Thursday 5 November. We contact the pupil and one of their parents to confirm

any social contacts or travel contacts during this time. All members of staff produce seating plans and we use these to identify those pupils who have been sat in close proximity with the pupil who has tested positive. The area of close proximity is those sitting to the side, in front and behind in each lesson the pupil has been sat in without a face mask. Whilst moving around the classroom and on corridors, pupils wear their face mask as the mitigating factor to reduce transmission.

Once pupils have been identified we now do a double-check of seating plans with members of staff as in some cases the seating plan changes due to results of tests and our online seating plan system is either updated immediately or later. We have used the current seating plan in all cases to date and this has caused a problem in two instances where moves have been made due to a test and the pre-test seating plan should have been used; similarly on the day of a lesson, a change may have been made for that lesson and the seating plan not updated online. I apologise to those pupils and their parents/carers for any inconvenience this may have caused in the small number of instances this has happened.

The advice to self-isolate for fourteen days is the national guidance. The reason to self-isolate is not because all other pupils have symptoms but because they may develop symptoms within a period of fourteen days. The reason no one else must isolate is because the pupils we have been asking to self-isolate do not have symptoms.

The critical factor is that if anyone in a family has symptoms all members of the household should self-isolate for fourteen days – no pupil in this case should attend school whether they have symptoms or not. The reason is that being with family members in close proximity for greater periods of time means there is a greater chance of transmission.

The delay from point of last contact and a positive test result is due to the length of time a test is taken and result received. As I have stated previously, if someone has symptoms they should not be in school; we are told to act when a positive case is confirmed.

Notification of a positive case

In each case where a positive test has been confirmed, I have sent a letter to the parents/carers of the pupils who have been informed they need to self-isolate. I have not issued a letter to all our parents/carers as we are rigorously following DfE and PHE guidelines and taking advice where necessary. Over the last week, there have been three confirmed cases – a single case in three separate year groups. When I have written to parents/carers before the half-term break on such an occasion, I have had parents/carers ask not to keep receiving ParentMail notifications of matters that do not directly affect them. I want to assure parents/carers that we continue to maintain a COVID-19 Secure environment and will inform parents/carers if there is a case that directly affects them. If any parent/carer wishes to receive a notification letter for each case as they arise, please contact my PA, Heather Riley on enquiries@titussaltschool.co.uk and we will ensure you receive a notification letter for pupils in all year groups.

Uniform and PE Kit

The implementation of policy to allow pupils to wear PE kit to school on days when they have PE has worked very well and I want to thank our pupils for working with us to make this effective. On days when weather has been cold, we have encouraged pupils to wear base layers. As we move further into a season of colder weather and the need to keep at least one window open in a classroom for ventilation we all must consider the impact on our pupils and the wearing of school uniform. It is not the case that pupils should think that they can routinely wear their coats in the classroom; we would much prefer that pupils consider wearing base layers underneath their school uniform to keep warm in autumn and winter weather. It will be down to teachers in affected rooms to make a judgement on whether pupils can wear coats in classrooms in addition to wearing base layers underneath school uniform. In classrooms that are cold we are providing additional heating to ensure pupils do not feel the need to wear coats in the classroom.

As always, I wish to thank you for your continued support; the letters and emails of thanks are much appreciated and help us to continue to strive to do the best we can. If you have any concerns about any of what is contained in this letter, please do not hesitate to contact me at school.

I wish to thank all of our pupils for working with us and adhering to the systems we have in place; there has been a lot of significant change that we have all had to adapt to very quickly and I continue to be proud of what we have achieved together.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ian Morrel', written in a cursive style.

Ian Morrel

Headteacher