



HANDS



FACE



SPACE

10th September 2019

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Since the full start of term we have had a small number of confirmed cases of Covid-19. The College has worked closely with the Public Health Agency and has identified and informed those pupils who have been in close contact. Those pupils are now self-isolating at home in line with Public Health Agency advice and work is being supplied for them. We appreciate that having to self-isolate creates challenges for the pupils affected and their family, but self-isolating is necessary to stop the virus spreading to other people. It is the same with wearing face coverings and socially distancing; we would rather we didn't have to do it, but we do it nonetheless because we each owe a duty of care to everyone around us. By taking these individual and collective actions we will curtail the spread of the virus, keep the school open and be able to return to normal sooner rather than later.

In light of our experiences in handling these cases we have reviewed and up-dated our procedures. The information and flowcharts that I sent you on the 26th August still stand. In order to help us to respond efficiently and effectively with any confirmed cases, we have set up a dedicated e-mail account, covid@methody.org, which you **must only use** to inform the school if your child tests positive for Covid-19. The information you provide will be shared with the Public Health Agency and used by the College to take action to promote a safe and healthy environment in school.

Accompanying this letter is the latest information provided by the Chief Medical Officer. Please read it in conjunction with the following and act accordingly should the situation arise. The Positive Covid-19 Flowchart and example at the end of this letter should help to clarify how our processes will work.

1. If your child tests positive for Covid-19 you should:
 - a. Keep them at home and follow the advice of the PHA.
 - b. Download and complete the form **METHODIST COLLEGE: COVID-19 POSITIVE TEST ALERT**. This form is available from the school website and a copy has been attached to this message <https://www.methody.org/>
 - c. The form should be saved as your child's name and tutor group e.g. Henry Matier L6S
 - d. e-mail the completed form to covid@methody.org. This e-mail account will be monitored seven days a week.
 - e. During school hours, if you require help in completing the form, please phone the school on 02890 205 202.

2. If your child is sent home as a precautionary measure following notification that a pupil in school has tested positive for Covid-19, they should remain at home for the following two school days. If they are subsequently confirmed as a **close contact** you will receive a Schoolcomms message by 5pm on the second day after they have been sent home, instructing them to self-isolate for 14

days. If you are **not** contacted, then it means they are **not** a close contact and they can return to school.

3. If your child is identified as a **close contact** of someone who has tested positive for Covid-19.
 - a. **Keep them at home.**
 - b. You should expect to be contacted by the Public Health Agency's Contact Tracing Service from (028) 9536 8888. Please be aware that the PHA Contact Tracing Team is dealing with high volumes of information. They will endeavour to contact you as soon as possible, but this may take them a number of days.

The current medical advice from the PHA is that someone who has been in close contact with a person who has tested positive for Covid-19 **must** self-isolate at home for 14 days from the time of their last contact. **This is because they are at risk of developing symptoms themselves in the next 14 days and could spread the virus to others before the symptoms begin.** Your child must therefore self-isolate for 14 days, unless they are told otherwise by the PHA. Other members of the household do not have to self-isolate unless your child develops symptoms of Covid-19.

Close Contact means:

- a. a person who has been within 2 metres for more than 15 minutes
- b. a person who has had face-to-face contact (within one metre):
 - i. being coughed on
 - ii. having a face-to-face conversation within one metre
 - iii. having skin-to-skin physical contact, or contact within one metre for one minute or longer without face-to-face contact
- c. a person who has travelled in a car
- d. people who spend significant time in the same household

The PHA Contact Tracing Team will advise close contacts to self-isolate for 14 days, irrespective of whether the contact has had a negative Covid-19 test. As long as the close contact and everyone else in their household has no Covid-19 symptoms, the remainder of the household can carry on with their normal activities.

If a close contact develops COVID-19 symptoms (a new continuous cough, a fever/high temperature or loss of smell/taste) they should seek a test. Their household contacts should also then self-isolate pending the result of that test. If the test is negative: the close contact should still complete their 14 days self-isolation period; and the household contacts can resume normal activities. If the test is positive: the close contact becomes a case and the 'clock' resets for a new period of self-isolation for 10 days from the date of onset of symptoms; and their household contacts should remain in self-isolation until 14 days have passed since the onset of symptoms in their household member.

If you have any concerns you can call the NHS Helpline on 111, explain the situation and ask for further advice. You can also obtain up-to-date advice online on the PHA website.

4. Your child only needs to self-isolate if they develop symptoms of Covid-19 or they are contacted by the College or the PHA Contact Tracing Service and instructed to do so. Other pupils in your child's year group or class may be isolating because they have tested positive or have been identified as close contacts, this does not mean that your child has to self-isolate as well.

Please note that pupils who are sent home as a precautionary measure and those self-isolating because of Covid-19, will have their absence recorded using a specific code. This will mean that their attendance record will not be affected by their requirement to self-isolate.

I would like to thank you for your support and understanding in these challenging times. In spite of the ongoing health situation the start of the new academic year has been very positive and we look forward to re-establishing all of the enriching aspects of life at Methody as soon as it is safe to do so.

In the meantime, please continue to reinforce with your child the importance of:

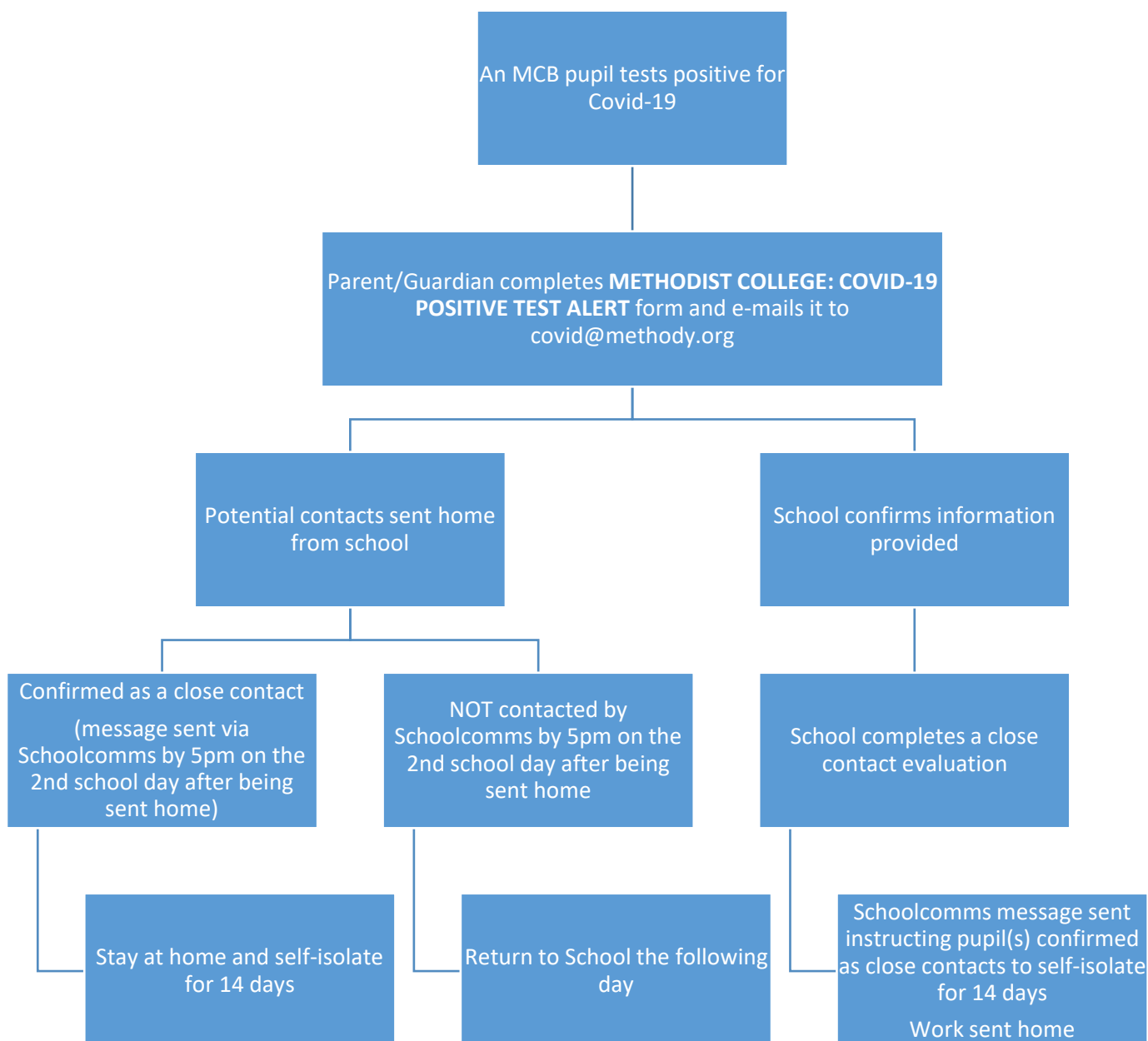
- **practising social distancing as much as humanly possible**
- **wearing a face covering when indoors (school buildings, school transport, local shops etc.) washing their hands thoroughly throughout the day**
- **following 'catch it, kill it, bin it' when they sneeze or cough**

Thank you.

Yours sincerely

Mr S Naismith

Principal



Example.

A 5th Form pupil, John, develops symptoms of Covid-19 on the evening of Wednesday 9th September. He does not attend school the next day and gets a test. The test results come back on Friday 11th confirming that he has Covid-19.

John's parents download and complete the Methodist College COVID-19 POSITIVE TEST ALERT form and e-mail it to covid@methodistcollege.org.uk on Friday 11th September. They provide the names of six other pupils in the College that John has had close contact with and state that his last day in school was Wednesday 9th September.

The School nurse contacts the family to confirm the details on the form.

The pupils in all of John's classes and those identified on the COVID-19 POSITIVE TEST ALERT form are sent home on Friday and told not to come in to school on Monday and Tuesday as a precautionary measure and to allow the school to determine which pupils need to self-isolate.

The VP Pastoral contacts the teachers of the classes that John was in on Tuesday 8th and Wednesday 9th to ascertain who has been in close contact with John. This information is collated and checked on Monday 14th and Tuesday 15th. The parents of those pupils confirmed as being close contacts are sent a Schoolscomm message by 5pm on Tuesday 15th, instructing them to self-isolate for 14 days. As John's last day in school was Wednesday 9th, these pupils will return to school on Thursday 24th September. The school arranges for work to be sent home to these pupils during this period. The other pupils who were sent home as a precautionary measure return to school on Wednesday 16th.

John's symptoms developed on Wednesday 9th September, so he has to self-isolate for 10 days. This means that John returns to school on Monday 21st September (the first school day after his 10 days' isolation have been completed), if he is well.

John's sister Janet, has to isolate for 14 days from the day John developed symptoms. This means that she will return to school on Thursday 24th September (the first school day after her 14 days' isolation have been completed), if she is well.



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