



23<sup>rd</sup> September 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

### **Update for all families: Year 9 to return to school on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2020**

As you will be aware, Year 9 students were sent home from school yesterday and have been self-isolating at home today. The situation has been a complex one, in which we have sought to make decisions in liaison with the Department for Education that protect the entire school community.

We are writing to inform you that we have now received further information, which leaves us clear that there has not been a confirmed positive case of Covid-19 within Year 9. We have discussed the matter further with the Department for Education today.

We have written to the parents and carers of students in Year 9, to confirm that all students in Year 9 should return to school, as normal, tomorrow morning. The only exception to this is students who are self-isolating because either:

- They, or a household member, has symptoms of Covid-19 or is awaiting a test result, or
- A household member has tested positive for Covid-19.

This situation highlights the importance of timely information being provided to the school about any Covid-19 related symptoms within households. We recognise that the current national challenges with the testing system make this situation complicated and frustrating for families.

Schools do not have access to the NHS Test and Trace database. It is therefore imperative that information conveyed to the school is truthful, accurate and clear, enabling the school to have the full information to act in the best interests of the school community. It is also essential that all families frequently check emails and phone messages from the school. If contacting the school about Covid-19 symptoms an accurate phone number, at which a family member with parental responsibility can be reached at all times, must be provided to the school. This is the only way in which the school can be sure it can take any necessary action in the swiftest and most fully informed way possible. With this in mind, if you need to update your details on the school system, please do so this evening by emailing [info@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk](mailto:info@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk).



When students are sent home from school in instances such as this, we are required to act extremely swiftly to maintain the safety of the school community. This may result in students being sent home from school in the middle of the day, at the same time that parents and carers are contacted. In response to feedback, we will ensure that we alert families via text as well as email and letter should such an occasion occur again.

Please ensure that you have an agreed plan in place with your child about what would happen in a situation such as this. We recommend that this includes:

1. An agreed plan for how your child would travel home
2. Ensuring that your child has keys if nobody is in at home during the day
3. A clear plan for who your child would contact if you were out of reach and they needed help, bearing in mind that we would not be able to hold students at school.

We are sure many of you share our frustration at this situation and we are very sorry for any upset that has been caused by the decision to send Year 9 home. If you have any questions, please contact [e.odriscoll@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk](mailto:e.odriscoll@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk) who will arrange for a member of our senior team to contact you and discuss any matters further. We are delighted that all of our year groups will be able to continue to benefit from the direct, expert teaching that our teachers are able to provide. As always, your continued support and understanding in this ever-changing situation is very much appreciated.

Yours faithfully

Gloria Lowe  
Headteacher