



Dear Parents,

I wanted to let all parents know that I wrote to Year 11 parents late last night, to update them that there has been a confirmed case of Covid-19 in that year group, hence all Year 11 students have been asked to stay away from school today. Given the late hour of the notice, I did not write to all parents last night but now want to update our whole community. I need to add that this morning, a further Year 9 student has been confirmed, making a total of three confirmed Covid-19 cases amongst students.

As previously communicated, this week we have had three cases amongst the staff and, as a result, the majority of the Senior School Biology and Chemistry teachers have been isolating; it is likely that a number of these staff will be able to return to school very shortly as the Health Protection Team confirm who has been identified as being in close contact in the department's office. In the meantime, those isolating teachers are delivering their lessons from home and we have other staff supervising their classes in school.

With regards to both Year 9 and Year 11 year groups being all out of school today, while we are waiting for the local Health Protection Team to give us clear guidance, the school has been working hard to identify possible connections between the cases. It is very likely that, as an outcome, we will be able to bring a number of Year 9 and Year 11 students back into school and limit the isolation to the smaller number of students who have been in close contact with the affected students. While this tracing continues, we are of course undertaking deep cleaning of all spaces used by the Year 9 and Year 11 bubbles.

I am very conscious that this may all feel alarming but, through liaising closely with Headteachers elsewhere, it is clear that all schools are facing the same challenges. We have initially taken a careful approach in sending whole year groups home while we identify the smaller group of students who may have been in closer proximity, but I hope that this process will become more streamlined as the guidance from the Health Protection Team evolves and we benefit from the experience of having to put it into practice.

At this point I need to emphasise that all of our students have a role to play in minimising the number of students who need to isolate when we – sadly inevitably – have cases. They can do this by complying with all of the measures that we have in place but, crucially, I would encourage all students to continue this out of school. A casual social encounter with peers out of school and not respecting social distancing may have an enormous impact on the numbers who may need to isolate at a later time. Please do work with us, to ensure we can minimise the numbers being isolated.

Finally, I wanted to thank you again for your positive wishes. I am aware that we are sending a significant number of updates but, particularly given the vulnerability of a number of our families, I want parents to feel fully informed.

With very best wishes,

Geoffrey Stanford

Headmaster

PS. Attached is a letter from Public Health England which we have been asked to forward to parents. I hope that this provides some helpful clarification on if, and when, children need to be tested for Covid-19.

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