



1 December, 2020

Dear parents and carers,

I am writing to inform you that we have had a confirmed case of COVID-19 in year 7 and another member of staff at Highlands School. I am sure you will join me in wishing them a speedy recovery.

I would like to explain how and why the school takes the decisions it does around asking students to self isolate, as parents and carers have been writing to the school and calling to ask about why we have not asked whole classes and year groups to self isolate.

When we have a confirmed case of COVID-19 at school we ring the Department for Education (DfE) and they advise us on what action to take. On every occasion that we have called them they have advised us to trace the contacts that the infected student or staff member has had and then tell those who have had contact to self isolate.

I know that parents, carers and the wider community will have a range of views on self isolation and the spread of COVID-19 and the decisions we take will not please everybody all of the time. However, I know that the vast majority of the members of our school community, including students, parents and carers, staff and the governing body, would want our decisions on this very important issue to be guided by the advice of health professionals such as PHE.

I ask that parents and carers do not email or call the school to ask for explanations about why we do or do not ask students to self isolate. The answer will always be that we are following the guidance of the DfE and PHE. These calls and emails to the school take time to respond to and stop us doing other important work.

The Highlands School community have been enormously supportive throughout this pandemic. Our attendance is higher than schools in Enfield and schools nationally, the vast majority of students are logging on to Google Classrooms and completing work at home. I ask that we continue to work together over the coming months to make sure the students at our school get the best educational experience possible in these challenging times.

What to do if your child develops symptoms of COVID 19

If your child develops symptoms of COVID-19, they must not come to school and should remain at home for at least 10 days from the date when their symptoms appeared. Anyone with symptoms will be eligible for testing and this can be arranged via <https://www.nhs.uk/ask-for-a-coronavirus-test> or by calling 119.

All other household members who remain well, must stay at home and not leave the house for 14 days. This includes anyone in your 'Support Bubble'.

Further information is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

The 14-day period starts from the day when the first person in the house became ill.

Household members should not go to work, school or public areas and exercise should be taken within the home. If you require help with buying groceries, other shopping or picking up medication, or walking a dog, you should ask friends or family. Alternatively, you can order your shopping online and medication by phone or online.

Household members staying at home for 14 days will greatly reduce the overall amount of infection the household could pass on to others in the community

If you are able, move any vulnerable individuals (such as the elderly and those with underlying health conditions) out of your home, to stay with friends or family for the duration of the home isolation period.

Symptoms

The most common symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are recent onset of:

- a new continuous cough
- a high temperature
- a loss of, or change in, your normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia)

For most people, coronavirus (COVID-19) will be a mild illness.

If your child does develop symptoms, you can seek advice from the nhs.uk website at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/check-if-you-have-coronavirus-symptoms/>. If you are concerned about your child's symptoms, or they are worsening you can seek advice from NHS 111 at <https://111.nhs.uk/> or by phoning 111.

How to stop COVID-19 spreading

There are things you can do to help reduce the risk of you and anyone you live with getting ill with COVID-19

Do

- wash your hands with soap and water often – do this for at least 20 seconds
- use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available
- wash your hands as soon as you get home

- cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not hands) when you cough or sneeze
- put used tissues in the bin immediately and wash your hands afterwards

Further Information

Further information is available at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Yours sincerely,

Vincent McInerney - Headteacher