

Dear Parents,

We are now approaching the end of the third week back at school and I wanted to write to provide a further update. I continue to be very grateful for the support and good sense of our parent body at this challenging time. It has been lovely to have the pupils back in school and they are responding very well to the measures which are in place. In senior school all of the pupils are wearing their masks in communal areas and they are remaining in their respective zones.

The Guidance

At the time of writing we have had a number of pupils and staff who have accessed tests, but we have had only one confirmed case of COVID 19 which parents have been informed about. I will let all parents know each time we have a confirmed case and in which year group this is. Can I also say thank you to parents who have kept their children off school when a family member is experiencing symptoms or is waiting on a test. It seems timely to remind parents about some aspects of the guidance. I understand that some of this is confusing and may even seem contradictory. It is clear that the public health authorities are seeking to find a balance between keeping children in school and minimising the risk of transmission, and that this is not easy. Some points to stress:

- If anyone in a student's household begins to experience any one of the relevant symptoms or is waiting on a test result, then **all pupils** in that household must not attend school until the end of the isolation period or the person returns a negative test. The symptoms are: a high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature); a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual); a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal.
- However, if pupils are asked to self-isolate because they have been identified as close contacts of a confirmed case outside of their household, and they themselves are not experiencing symptoms, then their other household members **do not need to self-isolate in these circumstances.**
- **Close contacts who are not experiencing symptoms themselves do not need to get a test.** Returning a negative test during this period will not shorten the length of time that they need to remain at home for. I quite understand parents being anxious during this period and the desire to seek reassurance from getting a test; however, it is also clear that people seeking tests in these circumstances are adding to the pressure on the testing system.
- If a student is identified as a close contact of a confirmed case and begins a period of self-isolation and then begins to experience symptoms themselves they should get a test and let school know if that is positive. At that point they must begin a further 10 days of self-isolation.
- **Pupils in senior school are expected to come to school with their own face covering.** We have an emergency supply in school for pupils who forget but it is clear that some pupils are using these masks everyday. The same is happening on the school buses.

- **Pupils must wear their masks on the school buses.** We have had some reports of pupils not doing so. I need to stress that sitting without a face mask near a student on a bus who tests positive would count as being a close contact. If students flout the rules on the school buses they will be asked to find alternative travel arrangements to school.

Work for pupils who are having to self-isolate

This will be set through google classroom and pupils are expected to keep up with this work at home, as long as they are well. This will be done in a variety of ways depending on the nature of the lesson. For pupils who are new to Hulme, please can I stress that material from those lessons should not be published on any other social media channel. In the Nursery & Infants teachers are in direct contact with parents by email with regards to work.

As with pupils, we have already had a number of staff who have had to self-isolate with a family member who is experiencing symptoms. In most cases these colleagues are able to teach their timetabled lessons from home and we have employed additional temporary cover supervisors to supervise classes in these circumstances. Again, I would ask for parents' patience as we do our best to adapt.

Extra-curricular programme

I am pleased that this has now begun. Nursery & Infants and Juniors have published their details and senior school activities which are possible have also started, such as CCF. Philosophy Debate Club is starting soon as is girls' football. It was pleasing to see a good turn out for the football practices last Saturday morning. Please do encourage your children to get involved in these activities.

Online Introductory Evenings

At this time of year we would normally be holding a series of introductory evenings in school for various year groups. Parents will understand why this has not been possible this year and I hope you have found the recorded presentations which have been sent out useful. If parents in those year groups have had difficulty accessing those presentations then please do let us know through admin@ohgs.co.uk.

Safety on Chamber Road

Please can I appeal again to parents not to park dangerously on Chamber Road or to congregate at the top gate at the end of the school day. This is a busy road and we are keen to do all we can to make this as safe as possible. Last week there was an accident on the crossing involving a pupil. Thankfully the student is ok, but this does underline the dangers. We are stressing to pupils in school the importance of using the crossing correctly, and we lock the top gates during the day so that pupils who need to cross the road are directed towards the crossing. Please can I ask parents to reinforce this message at home.

Autumn Open Events

Again for obvious reasons it will not be possible to hold our usual autumn open events. We will shortly be adding some virtual materials including a tour of the school to the website and I would ask parents to encourage their friends and family to have a look. We will be offering individual tours to parents in a COVID secure way and will of course be offering our own Year 6 parents the opportunity to visit senior school should they wish to do so.

I stressed during lockdown that we needed parents to pay their full fees last term in order to ensure that the school the pupils left was the same that they returned to. I am pleased to say that the support of parents at that time has ensured that is the case. Our pupil numbers have held steady from last year and we have had very good intakes into Year 7 and 12. I therefore again want to say thank you to parents for supporting the school in this way. You have played a vital role at this difficult time. Please do continue to promote the school locally.

Yours sincerely,

CJD Mairs
Principal