

2 March 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

Thank you for your measured and supportive response to my email sent on Thursday in relation to COVID-19. Please be assured that the student only has mild symptoms. They are self-isolating at home and were tested on Friday; the test results are due this week and I will update you as soon as I have more information. So far in the UK, 99.7% of people who have been tested have had a negative result. The vast majority of students attended school as usual on Friday, and the atmosphere in school was calm and focused.

I am aware that there has been some debate about the situation on social media. Please can I ask that you are considerate of the child and family affected in any comments that you share in a public forum.

You may also be aware of an article that appeared on the Nottingham Post website on Friday, after they contacted school to confirm the details of my message. Going forward all information provided to parents on the subject of COVID-19 will also be shared on the school website. I am however aware of other schools and workplaces in the local community who are in a similar situation.

A few parents have suggested that sharing the year group or class that the student is in would be helpful. For confidentiality reasons, and in line with our procedures for other medical conditions, it is not appropriate for us to share this information with all parents and students.

I know some parents are also concerned that by discussing COVID-19 with students we are adding to their anxiety. However, we do have a responsibility to educate our students about how they can reduce their risk of spreading viruses, and to ensure that they have factual information, as well as an opportunity in school to share any anxieties or concerns.

As the situation is continuing to develop in the UK and globally, we have developed a school COVID-19 strategy. This is based on the current NHS and Public Health England guidance and will be reviewed in line with any changes to the guidance or circumstances. The health and wellbeing of our students and wider school community are of paramount importance, but this also involves avoiding any unnecessary disruption to learning and normal school activities. I am aware that a number of families have members who are high risk in relation to COVID-19 symptoms, and that some parents work with people who are high risk. As always, we will aim to keep school open wherever possible, but will ensure that you are aware of any future suspected or known cases within the school community and Public Health England guidance in relation to school attendance.

Whilst the symptoms of COVID-19 are not serious in the vast majority of cases, it is important that we put in place common sense measures that will reduce the spread of COVID-19 and other viruses in order to protect vulnerable members of our community and to reduce the pressure on our health services.

Please familiarise yourself and members of your family with the NHS guidance in relation to COVID-19. www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/. Please discuss the guidance in relation to personal hygiene and reducing the spread of viruses on the attached poster with your child(ren). You can check if someone requires a COVID-19 test by phoning NHS 111 or using their online service 111.nhs.uk/covid-19, but **do not** visit your GP surgery or A & E if you suspect you may have COVID-19.

Please check and follow the guidance at www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public in relation to any illness, travel or contact with anyone suspected or known to have COVID-19. Anyone who is a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19 must self-isolate for 14 days. Information on the definition of a **close contact** and **self-isolation** is available from the NHS website above.

Please ensure that you support us in implementing the following NHS and Public Health guidance:

- *Please encourage your child(ren) to establish good hygiene routines including regular hand washing and use of tissues if they cough or sneeze.*
- ***Students with a cough, temperature, or flu-like symptoms should stay at home (regardless of their travel history) and you should contact NHS 111 for advice if required. It is essential that you notify school of the absence as soon as possible so we know where your child is.***

- Please **do not come to the school site if you have a cough, temperature, or flu-like symptoms, or meet the criteria for self-isolation**. Meetings can be held over the phone or rearranged as necessary.
- Please make us aware if anyone in your family home or in close contact with your family has known or suspected COVID-19, or has returned from a country or area with an outbreak of COVID-19 within the last 14 days. This will help us to understand the level of risk within our school community and to inform our decision-making.

As a school, other measures that we are taking include:

- We will ensure that soap, hot water and hand driers are available, as well as hand sanitiser in key areas.
- Students who develop cold or flu symptoms during the school day will be sent home. Please reinforce the message with your child that they must tell a member of staff if they feel unwell during the school day. Students are not allowed to use mobile phones in school and do not need to contact parents themselves.
- We will keep parents up to date about any members of the school community who are self-isolating and being tested for COVID-19 and any confirmed cases as soon as possible.
- We are reviewing and increasing our daily cleaning procedures, and any areas recently used by someone being tested for COVID-19 will be thoroughly cleaned as a precaution.
- We will be checking that all visitors to school and off-site activity hosts are aware of and following the gov.uk guidance for educational establishments.

As part of our plan we are starting to think ahead about possible action the school may need to take in future weeks and months.

We hope to run as many of our events and activities as possible. We will try to give parents and students at least 48 hours of notice if we decide to cancel or postpone any events. At present, the Year 8 Hagg Farm visit is going ahead as planned although students will not be able to attend if they are unwell. We are monitoring the situation with regard to the Paris trips and will provide an update to parents and students as soon as we can.

Teachers will be placing lesson resources onto Go4Schools where possible to support students during any absences. Please ensure that both you and your child can access Go4Schools and contact school if you need support with this. We are also expanding our use of Google Classrooms which provides a wider range of options for remote learning in case we are required to have more students working at home or have a school closure at some point in the future. We will be providing more information about google classrooms for parents in the upcoming weeks.

Students in Year 11 and their parents may be concerned about possible disruption to their GCSE exams and preparation. OFQUAL are monitoring the situation and we will share any guidance or advice with you. It is important to note that OFQUAL have a contingency date of 24th June 2020. Please ensure that your child is available to sit exams up until and including this date. External exams cannot be rescheduled by the school but could be rescheduled at a national level. The mock exams over the next 2 weeks will be going ahead as planned, although we will have contingency arrangements in place for students who miss any mock exams due to absence. We are continuing to develop resources for remote learning for Year 11 in case these are required. Parents can support this by ensuring students have study facilities and resources at home and are establishing good independent learning routines.

Yours faithfully,

Mrs A Mellors
Headteacher