



6th July 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

Following my letter informing you of the decision to close the school for the remainder of this week I am now writing to explain in more detail why this decision was taken.

As you are aware there is now evidence of community transmission at the school. There have been cases in all five year groups attending school at present and in four year groups there has been more than one case. There have now been 16 cases within the school community over the previous two weeks. Our contact tracing has identified possible links between cases within year groups and between year groups. In addition the number of cases is increasing, with the most recent eight cases being reported to the school over a four day period. We have consulted with Public Health England, who have agreed that it would be sensible to close the school for a period of time to try to stop transmission in the school community.

Aside from the public health reasons, I am very aware of the increasing disruption caused by whole year groups or part year groups being required to self-isolate for a period of time. Currently the whole of Year 8 and parts of Years 7, 9, 10 and 12 are out of school. This is not only impacting on their learning but also on their wellbeing as, if identified as a contact, children are having to self-isolate at home. It was apparent that the current pattern of positive cases, with whole or part year groups isolating, was likely to continue unless we took measures to try to stop transmission. The situation with regards to Year 9 is a case in point as these students returned to school yesterday following a period of self-isolation and now a large number of students in the year group are having to self-isolate again.

Providing high quality teaching is very challenging in these circumstances, with students in school accessing lessons as normal and those at home having to either follow an adapted online curriculum or joining lessons (in Year 10 and Year 12) as observers only. These arrangements compromise the quality of learning for both the students in school and those at home. Teams lessons for all students will provide a better learning experience across the school as a whole while so many of our students are required to self-isolate. In addition, we have over 20% of our teaching staff self-isolating at present and this further compromises the quality of education. These staff are, however, able to teach Teams lessons from their homes. We are anticipating that the majority of self-isolating teaching staff will return to school next week.

It may seem incongruous to be closing the school when announcements about the ending of many restrictions are being made. However we are required to follow the COVID-19 guidance for schools and this still requires us to identify close contacts for all cases in the school community and then to inform them that they are to self-isolate.



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We have tried to ensure that we minimise the impact of this on our students by careful contact tracing and have managed to restrict self-isolation to groups within year groups in most cases. However, it is clear that with the increasing number of cases in the school and the number of children who are also showing symptoms, that a period of school closure is required at this time.

I very much hope that this will allow us to finish the school year without further disruption after students return to school from next Monday onwards.

Thank you for your ongoing support and understanding in what continues to be difficult and challenging times for us all.

Yours faithfully

Mr Steven Mackay
Headteacher