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Principal

Anton McGrath BA

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Dear Parent/Carer

I hope this letter finds you and your family safe and well.

You may be aware that, as part of the ongoing steps being taken to stop the spread of coronavirus, the government has launched a test and trace programme. This will include contact tracing for people who test positive for COVID-19 to ensure they are isolating, and to find out who they have come into close contact with who may also need to isolate.

I know this is a difficult time for many of you and your children for various reasons. While the delay of opening the college may have come as a disappointment, I would like to reassure you that we have worked hard to ensure the necessary safety measures are in place. The rise in the 'R number' for the North West region - which identifies if the spread of the virus is under control - means we must all play our part, now more than ever, to protect our families and the setting. This will help ensure we can continue to progress in welcoming back students and return to our more normal ways of life.

Working together to protect our community

It remains vital that we all continue to socially distance ourselves from anyone that we do not live with by keeping 2 metres apart. Regular and good handwashing with soap and water is also one of the most effective ways we can prevent the spread of the virus along with good hygiene by catching coughs and sneezes in a tissue and binning it. This will support a reduction in the R number and protect the wellbeing of everyone.

As part of the government programme, testing is now available for everyone who is symptomatic and so I would like to remind you all that should you display any of the below symptoms, you must self-isolate for 10 days (other household members for 14 days from when you started having symptoms) and not leave the house for any reason other than to go for a test.

If symptomatic, you should order a home testing kit or book a drive-through test at one of the regional testing centres immediately at www.nhs.uk/coronavirus or call 119 if you have no internet access.

Symptoms include:

- 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);
- loss/change in your normal sense of smell or taste.

If you test positive for coronavirus, the NHS test and trace service will send you a text or email alert or call you with instructions of how to share details of people with whom you have had close, recent contact and places you have visited. It is important that you respond as soon as possible so that they can give appropriate advice to those who need it. You will be told to do this online via a secure website or you will be called by one of the NHS contract tracers. If you're contacted by the NHS Test and Trace service, you will never be asked to provide any passwords, bank account details or pin numbers so please do be alert to any possible bogus calls.

Don't Be A Contact

If you are contacted by the NHS test and trace service because you have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for coronavirus you must begin self-isolation for 14 days from your last contact with the person who has tested positive. It's really important we all play our part and do this when alerted, even if we don't feel unwell because, if you have been infected, you could become infectious to others at any point up to 14 days.

The best way to avoid having to self-isolate and to reduce the chances that you will contract the virus is to take precautions and don't be a contact!

A close contact of someone with confirmed COVID-19, who may be asked to isolate includes:

Household:

- household members;
- people who have stayed overnight;
- sexual contacts;
- those living in shared accommodation;
- a household cleaner.

Or people who have had the following contact with the infected person:

- face-to-face contact or touching (less than 1m);
- direct contact within 2 metres for more than 15 minutes;
- travelled in the same car/within 2 seats on a plane;
- worked with them or been in a 'setting' they have visited (workplace/ GP/ school/ hospital).

While it is not always possible not to be a contact, especially with household members, there are steps that we can continue to take to limit our close contact with other people such as:

- Maintain social distancing by keeping at least 2 meters away from others
- Avoid travelling in the same vehicle as other people from outside your household
- Avoid sitting/standing close to others on public transport (where possible)

I would like to thank everyone for your continued support with home learning and the steps you are taking to keep our community safe. Should you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



Anton McGrath
Principal