

15<sup>th</sup> March 2021

15:35

Dear Families

**Re: COVID-19 update, reminders and thanks**

Thank you once again to all year 7 families who acted so swiftly on Friday in collecting their children and to the family of the student who had the inconclusive test. By 11:30am on Saturday, we were able to send the message out on social media (and later by email and our website) to say that year 7 students no longer needed to isolate and could return to school on Monday.

Please pass my thanks to all year 7 students who were due to have their lateral flow tests after 11am on Friday as their day would have been disrupted with new appointment times. All students were very understanding as to why their times needed to be changed and I was extremely impressed with their conduct.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank our medically trained parent volunteers who administered the additional tests the student received so that I was able to put forward what had happened to Public Health England and the Department for Education and have the proof of two negative LFTs. This enabled everyone who was asked to isolate to return to school.

As it stands, the current guidance from the government is that if a LFT is carried out in school, a negative PCR test cannot override the result of a LFT, despite it being more accurate. However, if the LFT is carried out at home, a PCR result can override the LFT result. As this is the current guidance, it could have been a possibility on Friday that all students would have had to continue to isolate despite the 3 further tests which came back negative (2 LFTs and 1 PCR). I am delighted, as I am sure many families will be too, that this was not the case.

Unfortunately, it is inevitable that positive cases and inconclusive results will undoubtedly disrupt the return to school over the next few weeks and months. We are very grateful for your understanding as we know that it can be very frustrating for you.

As a reminder, we would urge families to refrain from contacting the school to question decisions on isolation where possible and wait for official communication from school for further details. Each decision made to isolate students is taken very seriously and done in collaboration with the local Health Protection Hub as a minimum and with Public Health England and the Department for Education where necessary.

Our aim is to have all students in school as we want them all to have high quality face to face teaching. We will always endeavour to keep students in school but we will not compromise on safety.

Our first course of action will always be to isolate all students who we believe are close contacts and narrow it down further where possible. When we receive notification that there is a positive case or in this instance, where it is not clear if it is a positive result or not, a huge amount of work from various members of staff needs to happen so that the correct advice can be sought and messages can be sent to the right people. Unnecessary communication slows down this process and potentially results in important information being missed. With many of our support staff being involved with the mass testing at the moment, streamlining what we are doing is even more vital than ever.

In an age of social media and technology, it is often quite tempting to vent frustration and want immediate answers publicly. I would ask families to please consider those who are affected and how they must feel if they see the messages that are posted – this includes students who may have tested positive for COVID and are very ill, their families who may also be very ill, our staff who have to quickly



change plans and act quickly to keep the school safe and more recently with the LFTs, our medically trained parent volunteers who have kindly given up their time to administer the tests.

We will always send out communication as soon as we are able to so we would be grateful if you could wait until you see official communication from the school before speculating on what has happened. We understand it can be frustrating for some families but we are following the guidelines we have been given and doing the best we can do in the current circumstances.

Thank you to all the families I spoke to when you picked up your children who offered support and understanding for what we are doing and how we have handled the pandemic so far. It is a difficult time for everyone, but the education and safety of your children are always the top priorities with everything we do and the first things we consider when any decisions are made.

I hope you have a great week!

Best wishes and stay safe,



Krissi Carter  
Principal



FRAMEWORK FOR  
ETHICAL LEADERSHIP  
IN EDUCATION  
PATHFINDER

