

Monday 2nd November 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

I do hope you have had an enjoyable half term. I believe that as a school we managed to keep rates of infection incredibly low. We realise the situation in the country and in Northampton is getting worse and now is not the time to become complacent. Our aim is to maintain as normal a school as possible given the situation we find ourselves in.

During the half term break we have had to deal with a further five confirmed cases of Covid-19. This now means that we have had since we started back in September 9 student positive results and 1 member of staff. This has resulted in 42 students having to self-isolate. The cases during half term were:

1. A student in 8 AMY. This was the second case in this class. The student had been previously identified as a close contact. As this was a second case DfE advice was that all students who were not already self-isolating should self-isolate for 14 days. 18 students were identified.
2. A student in 8 EPE. The student did not have symptoms 48 hours prior to being in school and so DfE advice was that no further action should be taken.
3. A student in 8EPE. This was the second case in this class. The student did not have symptoms 48 hours prior to being in school and so DfE advice was that no further action should be taken.
4. A student in 7IRR. The student had symptoms on Saturday 24th October. The student was in school 48 hours before symptoms started. DfE advice was to identify close contacts and they should self-isolate for 14 days. 12 students were identified.
5. A student in 8DSS. The student did not have symptoms 48 hours prior to being in school and so DfE advice was that no further action should be taken.

In all cases despite the child feeling a little unwell they have had minor symptoms, and all are relatively well. I have also had to discuss our Covid-19 strategy with a representative from East Midlands Public Health, I had to explain the control measures that have been introduced and I am pleased to say that they were very positive about everything we have done and could not make any further recommendations.

When the National Lockdown, which is due to start on Thursday 5th November, was announced the government made it clear that ***“they will continue to prioritise the wellbeing and long-term futures of our young people and will not be closing schools, colleges or universities. It remains very important for children and young people to attend, to support their wellbeing and education and help working parents and***

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guardians. Senior clinicians still advise that school is the best place for children to be, and so they should continue to go to school. Schools have implemented a range of protective measures to make them safe." <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/new-national-restrictions-from-5-november>

I would like to update you on how we are continuing to cope with the risks of Covid-19 and suggest ways that you can keep your child as safe as possible and reduce the risk of them contracting Covid-19.

HANDS Hand hygiene

We have hand sanitizers outside every secondary classroom. We remind students of the need to sanitize every time they leave and enter a classroom. Please can I ask you to emphasize the importance of this with your child?

We have sinks in every primary classroom and all children are supervised by an adult when washing their hands at regular times throughout the day.

FACE Facemasks

We continue to ask all students, staff and parents who come onto the school site to wear a facemask. In secondary phase students must wear a facemask at all times apart from when they are in the classroom. The only exception is when they are being taken for their PE lesson when corridors are quiet. Unfortunately, we still have to remind a number of students to wear a facemask. We are providing on average 70 facemasks a day to students who have forgotten, lost or broken their mask. This is costing the school £14 a day, last half term we spent **£420** on facemasks. This is money, which would be better spent on your child's education. Please make sure your child has more than 1 face mask in their bag and also that they have a plastic bag to store their mask when they are in lessons.

SPACE Keeping your distance

This is without doubt the main challenge. Maintaining a social distance in our school environment is not easy. **However, some students make no effort to do this.** Please reinforce the need to do this. Students should not be within 1 metre of each other at any time and they should also try to maintain a 2-metre gap at all times. This is not possible in the classroom which is why we have seating plans that we expect students to follow at all times. It is also important that your child respects the rules on social distancing when they are walking to and home from school.

Parents accompanying primary age children to and from school are requested to maintain a 2-metre distance whilst waiting to drop off or collect their child from the designated entrance and exit points. Please keep your children with you at all times. Children should not be riding scooters or bicycles on the school site.

Parents are requested to leave site promptly after drop off and collection, using the designated central, primary path and gate.

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What you should do if you or a member of your family has symptoms?

If any member of your family has symptoms, then everyone in the household needs to self-isolate. Please inform the school and we will organise work for your child (please understand that work may not be set on the first day, your child should complete all outstanding homework first). You should organise for a test and self-isolate until the result is known. Should the result be positive please inform the school immediately using the following email. vjewell@ccs.northants.sch.uk.

We will need to know the date that symptoms started and the date of the test.

What does happen when the school gets a positive case?

We contact the DfE. They have a dedicated helpline for reporting positive cases in schools. The information they ask is the date of the positive test and when did the symptoms first start.

If the child was not in school 48 hours before symptoms started, then we are told that no further action should be taken. If the child was in school 48 hours prior to symptoms then we are asked to identify any **close contacts**, this could be students or staff who have come into contact as defined by:

- Skin to skin contact
- Face to face for 1 minute or more
- Within a distance of 2 metres for more than 15 minutes

We are also asked to identify friendship groups. As you can imagine this is not an exact science. The way we do this is to speak to the class and explain the situation; we do at this stage have to give the name of the student although students are usually well informed as social media works faster than us. We look at the seating plan to identify the 2 metre contacts and then ask students to inform us if they believe they have been in close contact even if they don't sit next to the student concerned. We also speak to teachers and for primary and KS 3 lessons look at lessons outside of the classroom e.g. PE and drama.

What happens if my child is identified as a close contact?

Any students who are identified as close contacts are taken out of the class and kept together until they can go home. Parents are informed and asked to collect their child as soon as possible or allow them to walk home if the parent wishes that. They must then self-isolate for 14 days. **This is the child only and not all of the family.** If symptoms do develop then you should take the appropriate actions. Work will be set for these students. On the first day we ask students to complete any outstanding homework as it is may take a day to get this organised. Please can I ask that you monitor any social media communication that your child may have as we have unfortunately had a couple of situations where students having to self-isolate have blamed the student concerned for making them 'have to' self-isolate. I hope we all realise that this is no one's fault, anyone could contract Covid-19.

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Why do you not self-isolate the whole class / bubble?

We do not make the decision of what to do if a child has a positive test result. The DfE consultant in collaboration with East Midlands Public Health does. If there are multiple cases in the same bubble then this may mean having to send home a class group, or even a year group.

Why do you send a letter to all parents when there has been a positive test result?

We follow the advice from the DfE helpline. If they say that we must take further action, then as well as identifying close contacts we are also expected to inform all parents. Although we do identify the year group and class, we would not name the child.

How will work be set and what support will my child get?

Secondary Phase

Teachers will set curriculum work for students who have to isolate through MS Teams. This will cover the same content as the work done in class and will ensure that students are not disadvantaged by having to isolate. Where practicable teachers will use MS Teams to allow students to observe/participate in the lesson remotely (this is generally for smaller groups such as those in Post 16).

Due to the practical nature of PE and drama lessons at KS 3 and core PE at KS 4 we will **not be setting work for these lessons.**

Primary Phase

Class teachers will set work for children who are required to self-isolate, which will cover the key content of learning to ensure that pupils are not disadvantaged by being required to stay at home. In the short term, work is being set via email and if required, a printed learning pack will be sent home. During extended periods of self-isolation, teachers will contact parents to check on your child's well-being and progress.

Following the outcomes of our Home Technology Survey, we will be moving forward by providing remote learning via MS Teams/Office 365. We will keep parents informed of age-appropriate developments and how to access your child's learning as soon as possible. The year group blogs will continue to communicate home learning tasks, learning highlights and key messages. Foundation Stage parents will also continue to access the parent share system via the 'Evidence Me' app.

It is vitally important that as soon as any member of your family develops any symptoms then all the family must self-isolate. If this is during the school day, please inform us and we will work with you to arrange for your child to be collected. If you and your family are self-isolating, please inform us. When the result of the test is known please let us know, if it is a negative test then your child can return to school. If it is a positive test, then please let us know when the self-isolation will finish.

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As we approach the winter months, we are considering the construction of marquee style buildings, which we could put up on our playground areas. This would mean that students would be able to have breaks and part of lunchtime outside when the weather is poor. I have made some enquiries and the costs quoted have been very high. If anyone has any business contacts in this area, we would like to hear from you. Please email Mrs. Jewell if you believe you may be able to help.

If you do have any further questions then I would ask that you contact Mrs Jewell at vjewell@ccs.northants.sch.uk who will respond to your query as soon as possible. Thank you for your continued understanding and support in helping to keep everyone at our school safe.

Regards



Gary Wakefield
Vice Principal