



18 September 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

### **Contingency Planning for Coronavirus Cases in School**

Firstly, a big thank you for your support in general but more recently with the wearing of facemasks. We have practically 100% compliance with facemasks now in corridors so I really appreciate you helping us on that front.

It's really been fantastic to see students back in school. They have responded brilliantly, no fuss, just 'keeping calm and carrying on!'. Thank you for your contribution in making this so easy for us.

You will have seen in the media that quite a few schools locally and nationally have had to send staff or students home for 14 days to isolate, in response to a confirmed case of Coronavirus. This letter is about our planning and preparation for such an event.

Of course, if we have a confirmed case, we will contact the local health protection team/NHS advice team/HCC for advice. My understanding is that schools have been asked to take a variety of approaches, from sending home the whole 'bubble' (in our case it would be a full year group) to sending home selected students, where their close contact with others can be established. It's our aim to be as sure as we can about students' and staff's close contacts in school, so that hopefully we will need to disrupt the education of as few students as possible, should a member of the school have a positive test.

Just for your information, the definition of a close contact is:

- having a face to face conversation with an affected person, within 1 metre
- being in contact with an affected person, within 1 metre for 1 minute or longer without face-to-face contact
- being within 2 metres of an affected person for more than 15 minutes

We are therefore taking the following measures:

- All classroom seating plans are stored centrally so we can quickly identify any students who have been in contact with an affected person in class. If someone is a confirmed case, we will have to go back 2 days before the onset of symptoms to look to see which students and staff may be affected.
- In PE, students will be changing in allocated positions, according to register alphabetical order. This 'changing plan' will be held centrally.
- We will also check whether students have accessed the Student Support Centre and the ACE room and who they may have had close contact with. Close contacts are unlikely in ACE or SSE because of the distancing measures we have put in place.
- From yesterday we have in place arrangements for students to record who they have been in close contact with at break and lunchtime (students are to use a couple of minutes at the beginning of periods 3 and 4 to make a note of close contacts in planners). We are thinking how we might do this for journeys to and from school

- We are taking steps so that we know where and with whom sixth form students are spending private study periods.
- We will also need to know which staff have come into contact with the student. This includes teachers as well as other support staff. As we are keeping social distance from students, we hope to avoid having to ask staff to self-isolate or sending students home if a member of staff is a confirmed case. Learning Support Assistants do work at close quarters with students. They do so for as little time as possible and wear a mask. They have records of the students with whom they have been working at close quarters, for each lesson.

Clearly, we would discuss all of this with the local health protection team/NHS advice team/HCC, with a view to making a decision about who should isolate.

### **Provision of Work**

Our approach to providing education remotely will change according to whether an individual, or a select group of students or a 'bubble' is asked to isolate. In the event of someone testing positive I will of course write home to inform you; in that letter I will set out the specific arrangements for the provision, assessment and marking of work. Much of it will be through Microsoft Teams, so it is imperative that your child knows their school e-mail address and password.

A student's email address is their school computer username followed by @monkswalk.herts.sch.uk. Their password is synced to the same one as their computer login at school (Years 7-11). Password resets can be carried out for students by their ICT teachers. Alternatively, your child can ask you or a sibling to send an email to [help@monkswalk.herts.sch.uk](mailto:help@monkswalk.herts.sch.uk), stating the student's e-mail address and the team can then reset the password.

If an individual or select group of students needs to self-isolate, we cannot provide live lessons (as the teachers will still be teaching classes). However, we will be putting work onto Microsoft Teams. We will also be directing students to Oak Academy, Bitesize or GCSEPod if we feel it is appropriate. We will be putting in place arrangements to assess and mark the work via Teams.

If a 'bubble' (i.e. a year group) or in the unlikely event the whole school is required to isolate (please no!!), we will revert to teaching most lessons on Microsoft Teams, as well as provide tutor sessions and assemblies. We will put some supplementary work onto Teams. We will assess and mark the work via Teams also.

As I say though, I will write home with more details if someone tests positive.

### **Dry Run**

We are planning a dry run next week to see how quickly and easily we can gather data about close contacts, should we need to. We may be asking some students for information for that process; no-one should be alarmed or concerned about this. We will talk to the students about what we are doing and we will ask you in advance if we would like your child to help us out.

### **General Reminders about Coronavirus**

I'm sure by now you are aware of all of this but just as a reminder:

- Students should wash their hands frequently for at least 20 seconds with soap and warm water. They must sanitise hands on arriving and leaving classes, and at the entrance to blocks
- Students should wash their hands as soon as they get home
- cover their mouth with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing. They should then dispose of tissues in the bin and wash hands

- Students must wear a mask in the corridors and on public transport. Masks should be stored in a plastic bag or wallet when not in use. Masks should be washed or changed frequently. Students should wash or sanitise hands after touching the mask.

It's particularly important that we all obey the social distancing and mixing rules out of school. A number of outbreaks locally and nationally appear to have been related to 17+ age groups socialising in the community.

Please could I ask you to discuss this letter with your son or daughter and make sure they have access to their school e-mail.

Thank you once again for helping us out.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kate Smith". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Kate Smith  
Headteacher