

16th September 2020

Dear parents/carers

We have become aware that there have been two confirmed cases of COVID-19 within the school.

As a result of this, I am sorry to inform you that we have been instructed to ask all of our sixth form bubble to remain at home for a period of self-isolation. Public Health England has advised us that students should self-isolate until Friday 25th September. This means that they should not return to school until Monday 28th September.

The school remains open for all other students in Years 7-11 and providing your child remains well they can continue to attend school as normal.

We have prepared for such an unfortunate eventuality and are able to immediately revert to remote teaching similar to that undertaken during full COVID lockdown. Students' timetables will remain as published. Tomorrow morning they should log on to their Microsoft Teams classes and registration groups. Further advice will follow from the sixth form team who will also be happy to answer your queries.

I would like to reiterate that it was always recognised that the reopening of schools nationally carried a degree of risk. The overarching principles for the risk management of reopening schools in September 2020 are that measures are proportionate and based on Department for Education (DfE) and Public Health England (PHE) guidance ([click here](#)). The reopening of schools is an exercise between balancing the school's commitment to providing an education for all students whilst minimising any risks in relation to contraction and transmission of COVID-19. School leaders support the government's ambition that all children and young people return to their place of education and have access to a full curriculum.

The ten control measures in the DfE guidance all recognise that positive cases of COVID-19 are likely to occur in schools, particularly if rates of transmission increase in the community. However, the control measures are in place to ensure that cases are minimised and reduce transmission. School staff have implemented a stringent system of controls in order to mitigate such an outbreak and will continue to work with PHE to manage the current situation.

In line with DfE guidance, UHS is operating year group bubbles as this allows students to access classrooms across the range of specialist subjects that they study. However, this does mean that each child will interact in lesson with different students within their year group. School leaders have carefully considered the risks and the DfE's ten control measures; the details are outlined in the school's risk assessment.

What to do if your child develops symptoms of COVID-19

If your child develops symptoms of COVID-19, they should remain at home for at least 10 days from the date when their symptoms appeared.

All other household members who remain well must stay at home and not leave the house for 14 days.

The 14-day period starts from the day when the first person in the house became ill.

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Household members should **not** go to work, school or public areas and exercise should be taken within the home.

Household members staying at home for 14 days will greatly reduce the overall amount of infection the household could pass on to others in the community.

If you are able, move any vulnerable individuals (such as the elderly and those with underlying health conditions) out of your home, to stay with friends or family for the duration of the home isolation period.

Symptoms

The most common symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are recent onset of:

- new continuous cough and/or
- high temperature
- a loss of, or change in, normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia)

For most people, coronavirus (COVID-19) will be a mild illness.

If your child or anyone in the household does develop symptoms, you can seek advice from NHS 111 at: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/> or by phoning 111.

How to stop COVID-19 spreading

There are things you can do to help reduce the risk of you and anyone you live with getting ill with COVID-19.

Do:

- wash your hands with soap and water often – do this for at least 20 seconds
- use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available
- wash your hands as soon as you get home
- cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze
- put used tissues in the bin immediately and wash your hands afterwards

Further Information

Further information is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19>

A number of inquiries have been received about the current situation. The responses to these are summarised as follows:

Who should self-isolate and what does this mean?

All students in our sixth form bubble are asked to self-isolate until Friday 25th September. They must follow the normal government guidelines for self-isolation. This means in short that they should not leave their home for any reason. They should try to avoid contact with anyone they live with as much as possible and friends and family should not visit the home. Please note that others in the household or support bubble are not required to self-isolate at this point unless they develop COVID-19 symptoms.

My child is in the same bubble as the student with the positive test for COVID-19. Do they need to self-isolate?

The advice from Public Health England is that individuals only need to self-isolate if they have had close contact with the individual who tested positive for COVID-19. Close contact is defined as within 2 metres for a period of 15 minutes or longer.

If the student with the positive COVID-19 test has siblings, do they need to self-isolate?

Yes. All members of the household need to self-isolate.

I believe that my child has had close contact with a sibling of the student who tested positive. Does my child need to self-isolate?

No. If a sibling develops symptoms or has a positive test, school staff will contact all families of students who have had close contact with the sibling to advise them of the next steps. School staff will update the wider school community of any further positive COVID-19 test results.

My child uses the same facilities as the sixth form bubble. Should I be concerned?

Any specialist classroom used by more than one bubble is thoroughly cleaned before and after use. Each year group has its own designated toilet facilities that are cleaned throughout the day. All students are expected to follow preventative hygiene measures; these control measures allow the school to operate year group communal spaces.

Are face masks now mandatory at Uxbridge High?

School leaders had anticipated that face masks would become mandatory at some stage during this term. Currently the seasonal conditions allow effective ventilation and that the majority of students are spending their break times in external spaces. Whilst at this time we are not recommending use of face coverings staff and students may use them if they wish in corridors when moving between lessons or in communal areas within the building. We are keeping this under constant review and may change this advice as we move forward. It is for this reason that we ask that all students carry a face covering (along with their own personal sanitiser at all times).

I would ask that all parents and carers watch this video ([click here](#)) and reinforce the key points with their child. Should any children be exempt from wearing a face covering, I would be grateful if their parent/carer contacts their child's guidance leader.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to the community for its unwavering support during these unprecedented times. I will continue to provide information to parents and carers on a regular basis and trust that although this letter brings bad news in the short term that it provides clarification and reassurance.

Yours faithfully



N B Clemens
Principal