

8th October 2020

Dear parents/carers

We have become aware that there has been a confirmed case of COVID-19 within the Year 10 bubble. We know that the student in question has been in close contact with your son/daughter.

As a result of this, I am sorry to inform you that we have been instructed to ask your son/daughter to remain at home for a period of self-isolation. Public Health England has advised us that students should self-isolate until Tuesday 13th October 2020. This means that he/she should not return to school until Wednesday 14th October, providing that they have not shown positive COVID-19 symptoms in the 48 hours preceding this date.

I realise that this may be a shock to you and I apologise that you were not contacted personally about this. As we have been working at speed with a significant group of students, our priority has been to get this message to the whole group as quickly as possible. If you have any queries, please contact Kellie King, Welfare Officer, on 01895 234060 in the first instance.

There is no need for students who are self-isolating to seek a COVID-19 test if they feel well. However, if they develop symptoms while undertaking self-isolation they should immediately seek a test.

In line with DfE guidance, you are aware that we have been operating year group bubbles. 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. The students asked to self-isolate from today are all in the Year 10 bubble.

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 Year 10 students should log on to their Microsoft Teams classes and registration groups. Given the number of students and staff involved at short notice, this may take a few hours to settle down. If by the end of the day tomorrow your son/daughter has not been able to log on please contact their tutor.

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.

Our overriding aim is to keep the school as open as possible. In order to do this we need to minimise the chance of any student or staff attending the site who is unwell with COVID-19. **We would ask that all families keep us up to date and particularly advise us immediately in the case of a positive test result for one of our students.** If you are in any doubt about sending your son/daughter to school please refer to the flowchart on our [website](#).

Principal: Nigel Clemens BSc, MA

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For students who receive free school meals, the school will be able to offer some support. The finance team will be in contact with you in due course.

To help clarify further, at the end of this letter we have developed a set of frequently asked questions that I hope you find helpful. This has also been published as a separate document on our website and we will continue to add to questions as they arise. If you have further questions that are not answered by our FAQs at this time, can I ask parents to email them to office@uhs.org.uk. We will do our best to address these in our FAQ mentioned above.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'N B Clemens', written over a horizontal line.

N B Clemens
Principal

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What happens when the school is advised of a positive COVID-19 case?

Once the school is advised of a positive test, a detailed exercise is undertaken. Public Health England is contacted immediately and a risk assessment is conducted. Based on the results of the risk assessment, PHE will then advise the school on the next steps; this could be asking a whole year group bubble to self-isolate or only close contacts of the student with the positive result. The school then informs the affected students and families before the start of the next day. The school also contacts the local education authority with details and the advice that has been given by PHE.

Who should self-isolate and what does this mean?

Only students who families receive a letter from the school advising them to self-isolate need to take any action. 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 a 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. We will notify any family/individual students who need to self-isolate.

If a student has a positive COVID-19 test and 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 a 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 student bubble(s) now on self-isolation. Should I be concerned?

No. Any specialist classroom used by more than one bubble is thoroughly cleaned before and after use. Each year group bubble has its own designated toilet facilities that are cleaned throughout the day. All students are expected to follow preventative hygiene measures and use separate communal spaces.

Are face masks now mandatory at Uxbridge High?

We anticipate that face masks may become mandatory at some stage during this term. Currently the seasonal conditions allow effective ventilation and the majority of students are spending their break times in external spaces. 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.

If a student comes into close contact with a student with a positive COVID-19 test and is asked to self-isolate, should other siblings/family members also self-isolate?

No, unless anyone in the family develops symptoms. Siblings in this situation may attend school as normal.

One or more of my children have been asked to self-isolate. Where can they access work?

Students should log onto Microsoft Teams where they will find work posted. If they are experiencing difficulties with this, they should email their tutor in the first instance for support.

Do staff maintain social distancing from students?

Staff maintain a 2m distance from students and other staff. Where there is a need for them to move closer in exceptional circumstances, this never exceeds 15 minutes. Staff have the option to wear a visor if they wish.

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What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

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

- a new continuous cough and/or
- a 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 can we 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>

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.