

12th November 2020

Dear parents/carers

We have become aware that there have been further confirmed cases of COVID-19 within the Year 8 bubble at the school.

As a result of this, I am sorry to inform you that we have been instructed to ask the Year 8 bubble to remain at home for a period of self-isolation. Following Public Health England advice, Year 8 students should self-isolate until Monday 23rd November. This means that they should not return to school until Tuesday 24th November, providing they have not shown any Covid symptoms in the 48 hours preceding this date.

For clarity, the advice that we have received is that those Year 8 students who are already self-isolating should now extend their self-isolation in line with the rest of the year group and should also now return on Tuesday 24th November.

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. It does mean though that each child will interact in lesson with different students within their year group. It does mean that other bubbles are unaffected at this time.

For the avoidance of doubt, the school remains open for all other students in Years 7, 9, 10, 11 and sixth form. Providing your child remains well they should 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 Year 8 students should log on to their Microsoft Teams classes and registration groups. Given the large 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 let us know by phone or email.

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

The Greenway, Uxbridge, Middlesex UB8 2PR t: 01895 234060 f: 01895 256738 e: office@uhs.org.uk w: www.uhs.org.uk

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 whose 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.

Why has my child been asked to self-isolate for a period shorter than 14 days?

Isolation periods directed by Public Health England can often be shorter than the standard 14 days. This situation arises when a student tests positive who has not been in school for a period as they have been ill at home. Close contacts are tracked back to the last day the infectious student attended. If, for example, this last day of attendance was 7 days ago, the directed self-isolation time for students who came in close contact with the infected student will only be 7 days.

Are face masks now mandatory at Uxbridge High?

In line with the 'high risk' status that London has been placed in, we have been advised that all students need to wear face covering in some circumstances. At UHS this will be:

- On arrival to school and in transit to bubble areas
- When moving around the school during the school day, e.g. to attend practical lessons
- When in some special school settings at the discretion of staff such as the library, main hall, etc.
- On leaving the school site and at bus stops in preparation for bus travel

We would encourage all students to use reusable face coverings in conjunction with a re-sealable plastic bag. This will be used to safely store the covering between uses. If students are using disposable coverings, they will need to place them in a special bin after each use and carry a supply of replacements for use throughout the day.

Face coverings will not be worn in lessons, outside at break or lunchtimes or when students move around in their own bubble. We would ask that students wear plain or simply patterned face coverings. I am sure that you will agree that we need to ask students to remove face coverings that are inappropriate for the school environment. A replacement will be issued.

Public Health England has produced a simple guide on how to make a face covering which you can view [here](#). I would ask that all parents and carers watch this [video](#) on how to safely wear a mask 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.

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.

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>