

22nd June 2021

Dear parents/carers

I write to parents of year 10 students with an important and urgent update on the COVID-19 position at UHS. This morning we have seen a sharp spike in positive cases among your son/daughter's year group. In risk assessing the situation with PHE advice, I am left with no alternative but to ask the entire year 10 bubble to self-isolate with immediate effect.

We have explained the position to students and arranged for them to leave the school immediately to return home.

Students should self-isolate up to and including Thursday 1st July 2021. This means that they should not return to school until Friday 2nd July provided they have not shown any COVID-19 symptoms in the 48 hours preceding this date.

For clarity, the advice that we have received from PHE is that those year 10 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 Friday 2nd July.

Students should continue with their twice weekly testing at home during the self-isolation period. If they develop symptoms during this time or receive a positive result on their home test, then you should book a PCR test as soon as possible.

For the avoidance of doubt, the school remains open for all other students in years 7, 8, 9 and 12. Other members of your household can continue normal activities provided your child does not develop symptoms within the self-isolation period.

I realise this may be a shock to you. If you have any health queries, please contact Kellie King, Welfare Officer, on 01895 234060 in the first instance.

We have prepared for such an unfortunate eventuality and are able to immediately revert to remote teaching similar to that undertaken during full lockdown. Students' timetables will remain as published. From Wednesday morning 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 on Wednesday, your son/daughter has not been able to log on, please contact their tutor.

You will be aware that year 10 exams began this week. In light of the position we now find ourselves in, we intend to postpone these until Monday 5th July.

This letter and further updates can be found on our [website](#). Please also contact the school if you have further general queries.

Yours faithfully



N B Clemens
Principal

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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 advised and a risk assessment is conducted. Based on the results of the risk assessment, the school will follow guidance 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.

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.

Why has my child been asked to self-isolate for a period shorter than 10 days?

Isolation periods directed by Public Health England can often be shorter than the standard 10 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 traced back to the last day the infectious student attended. If, for example, this last day of attendance was 5 days ago, the directed self-isolation time for students who came in close contact with the infected student will only be 5 days.

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.

Can I claim financial support if my child is asked to self-isolate?

Following updated regulations from the government, we have been made aware that in cases where students are asked to self-isolate, families may be entitled to claim financial support if parents/carers have to take time off work to care for their child. Details can be found [here](#). Please note that eligibility is subject to your financial circumstances and you should retain the letter you receive from the school informing you of your child's self-isolation in order to make an application.

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>