

15 July 2021

Dear Parents

I wish this correspondence was of a more positive nature, however I would like to clarify some upcoming changes.

### **Self-Isolation and contact tracing**

As I have stated in previous correspondence, we are seeing an increase in positive Covid-19 tests amongst students and this has been mirrored in other schools both locally and nationally. In line with guidance, we have asked close contacts to self-isolate and I thank all parents concerned for their cooperation and understanding in this process.

As of Monday 19<sup>th</sup> July, the responsibility for the identification of close contacts has been removed from schools as identified in the correspondence below:

Letter from Gavin Williamson, the Education Secretary

*From the 19 July, NHS Test and Trace will take on the role of contact tracing from schools, colleges and early years settings. NHS Test and Trace will also continue the role of contact tracing for out-of-school settings. From August 16th, those under the age of 18 years old will no longer be required to self-isolate if they are contacted by NHS Test and Trace as a close contact of a positive COVID-19 case. Instead, children, or their family members, will be contacted by Test and Trace, informed they have been in close contact with a positive case and advised to take a PCR test.*

<https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2021/07/08/a-letter-from-the-education-secretary-to-education-leaders/>

As a result of this we would ask for parents of students who test positive to inform NHS test and trace and the school. NHS test and trace will cover close contacts and ask them to self-isolate and the school will mark the student as absent. Please understand that we no longer have responsibility for asking potential close contacts to self-isolate and while we intend to collaborate with NHS test and trace when required, it is NHS test and trace that will oversee this process.

### **Face Masks**

On the 14 July 2021, the following communication from the Department for Education was published:

#### ***Information on the use of face coverings on dedicated school and college transport***

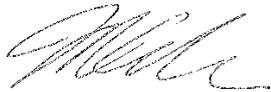
*On Monday, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care announced that Step 4 will go ahead on the Monday 19 July. The Prime Minister also said 'we expect and recommend people wear a face covering in crowded and enclosed spaces where you come into contact with those you don't normally meet such as on public transport'. We have therefore updated our operational guidance for settings which now recommends that face coverings are worn on dedicated transport to school or college when prevalence is high. This will be kept under review.*

I would advise therefore, that students using dedicated transport have a face mask in case it is required by the operator.

### **Duke of Edinburgh expeditions**

We have a number of Duke of Edinburgh expeditions scheduled to take place next week. At present, we intend to continue with these but may review this at the end of the day on Friday if the number of students who are unable to participate due to self-isolation has grown too large. If students are unable to attend due to illness or self-isolation, our intention is to run catch-up expeditions in the next academic year.

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Collins", with a stylized flourish at the end.

David Collins