



14 April 2021

Dear Parent / Carer

It has been brilliant to welcome our students back on to campus and I hope that you all had a restful and enjoyable Easter break. This term is always an exceptionally busy one in schools but even more so this year with the ongoing demands of the pandemic and the significantly different approach to both GCSE and A-level examinations.

As we have become accustomed to, there have been a lot of updates and changes over the Easter break that I would like to bring to your attention.

The guidance around home testing and the status of LFT tests has changed again and can be summarised below:

- **Confirmatory PCR reintroduced:** LFT testing is not suitable for anybody who has COVID symptoms; anybody with symptoms needs to obtain a PCR test (at a supervised test centre). The confirmatory PCR test has been reintroduced for testing at school. This means that anyone who takes a positive LFT **at home or at school** will be required to take a confirmatory PCR test. The positive LFT will still trigger the legal-duty to self-isolate for the positive case, household contacts and in-school contacts. However, they can stop self-isolating if the case receives a negative PCR taken within 2 days of the LFT. Attached is the Testing Flow Chart that outlines this change, see below the key parts of the SOP:

“School/nursery will identify close contacts of the case in the school setting (excluding household and social contacts outside of school) following a positive LFD case. Those contacts of a confirmed positive cases will be required to self-isolate in accordance with national guidance.”p.49

“The legal duty to self-isolate and tracing period will be triggered by the positive LFD test result. A positive LFD result will also trigger access to the Test and Trace Support Payment (for those eligible).” P.17

“If the follow-up test is negative from a test taken within 2 days of the positive LFD result, the staff/students and everyone in their household can stop self-isolating. Self-isolation notifications and the tracing process will halt.” P.17

It is important as always that we ensure that this guidance is followed and we are kept informed of any symptoms or positive cases within our community so that we can take swift and appropriate action.

You may be aware of the recent media attention surrounding allegations of peer on peer abuse in educational establishments and the testimonies posted online. On 31st March the Government announced the launch of a national helpline. The helpline will be run by the NSPCC to both support potential victims and provide advice to children and adults.

The Report Abuse in Education helpline can be reached on 0800 136 663, on Monday to Friday 8am - 10pm, or 9am - 6pm at weekends. It can also be contacted by email at help@nspcc.org.uk

As a campus we are reviewing our approaches in accordance with the guidance and have already begun plans to review and adapt our Pastoral and Life Skills lessons to ensure these significant issues are addressed in an appropriate fashion. There will be more about these changes shortly.

Our position as a school is clear: sexual violence and sexual harassment are never acceptable, will never be tolerated and are not an inevitable part of growing up. I can assure you that we will never permit such behaviour to become accepted as a cultural norm and we remain committed to working openly and transparently with our student community to promote mutual respect.

What should I do if I have concerns?

To continue to keep everyone safe, we must keep lines of communication open. The appropriate means for disclosing an allegation of abuse **relating to a student** is always to inform a member of the safeguarding team. In the event that an allegation is made against a **member of staff**, this must be sent to me directly, as Headteacher. We will always act on concerns raised.

Whilst I am not aware of any cases reported on the Everyone's Invited website, I am clear that we cannot monitor testimonies in this way nor can we act on anonymous information posted on social media because it is not possible to carry out a proper investigation into a report. It is also clear that some of the allegations on social media describe behaviour that is unlawful and if we were informed of such an allegation, we would refer to the police in the first instance.

The nature and volume of testimony regarding alleged abuse on social media reflects an issue for the whole of our society and as a school, we recognise and take seriously the role that we play in setting a culture of mutual respect for all. If any child or young person attending our schools is worried or upset by any content they have read on Everyone's Invited, we would encourage them to talk to a member of staff about their concerns when we return to school after the Easter break.

We remain committed to ensuring that every child benefits from a calm, respectful climate for learning. I hope that this letter offers you reassurance that we recognise the importance of this issue.

As a school we play a significant part in our local community and as such I am keen that our students play a positive and active role in shaping this community. It has been brought to my attention that litter has become a concern by residents living close to the school and those involved in local environmental groups. We know this will only be the result of a small minority of students but we want to make sure that we play an active role in ensuring we instill strong moral values within our students who have a respect for their community and environment. Consequently as a school the student leaders will be working towards achieving the Eco-Schools Award and seeking to address such issues as litter, recycling, sustainable resourcing and energy efficiency. More detail can be found here - <https://www.eco-schools.org.uk/about/howitworks/the-awards/bronze-award/>.

Our student leaders are exceptional individuals but the pandemic has made their work extremely challenging this year. We are all hoping that the coming term and year allows them to start to address some of the most important issues that matter to them and our community.

Finally I think it only appropriate that I share with you the letter from the Secretary of State for education to our students:

<https://dfemedia.blog.gov.uk/2021/03/26/a-letter-to-young-people-from-gavin-williamson-mp-secretary-of-state-for-education/>

We have been immensely proud of how they have conducted themselves this year and met the challenges that have faced them. They have been a credit to our school and your families.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W Teece', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

W Teece
Headteacher