

Outbreak Letter for School – Advice to all Parents

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Firstly, can I say a huge thank you for the support you have demonstrated over the past few days. Your kind words of appreciation and support, well wishes to staff team, and understanding of the complex nature of this situation has been brilliant and is very much appreciated. Thank you. I also appreciate your patience in waiting for this correspondence.

We now have several members of our school community who have tested positive for COVID 19. **Unfortunately, I can now confirm that we have 5 confirmed cases of COVID19 - all of these positive tests results are staff members.** We also have additional members of the staff team with possible symptoms.

We know that you will find this concerning and we are continuing to monitor the situation and are working closely with Public Health England. This letter is to inform you of the current situation and provide advice on how to support your child. Please be reassured that for most people, coronavirus (COVID-19) will be a mild illness.

I am extremely confident that my staff team and I have followed all DfE and NYCC guidance and risk assessment fully and carefully.

I have spent the entire day talking to various professionals and risk assessing the situation we find our school facing. **As result of this ‘outbreak’ and as a precaution school is to be closed for all pupils until Monday 28th September.**

This closure is not because the children themselves are necessarily at risk, but because all teachers and teaching assistants and myself have been advised from PHE (via me), to self-isolate for 14days from their last time in school. Quite simply, all of our teachers and teaching assistants can’t be in the building for the remainder of this week and all of next week. As I’m sure you will agree I cannot run a school without staff!

Yesterday, I sent parent mails to individual classes explaining whether or not the children needed to isolate. Having spoken to PHE experts this situation has changed. I now can say that as a precaution I am asking on behalf of PHE that the children in the following classes self-isolate as they **MAY** have had close contact with the staff team members who have tested positive. This is unlikely as we have followed all guidance and protocols, but as a precaution for the safety of the wider community, PHE deem it as appropriate guidance.

Children in the following classes should self-isolate:

- Reception – Mrs Smith’s Eagle’s class
- Year 1 -Miss Jackson’s Harrier class
- Year2 - Mrs Burton’s Kestrel class
- Year 3&4 - Miss Marshall’s Ospreys class
- Year 4&5 – Mrs Woodhouse’s Peregrine class

The only class of pupils that PHE have advised do not need to self-isolate is Miss Craven’s Year 6 Red Kite class.

For those pupils who have to self-isolate please refer to the information below.

I know this closure will be frustrating for many of you, and will have big implications on your time, work commitments, childcare etc. I can only apologise for this. However, I have repeatedly said the health and safety of the children, you and your families and my staff has to be at the centre of all decisions. I also can't run a school without staff – it is totally unpractical to bring in a full complement of supply teachers and support staff who will not know the children and have knowledge of our building, procedures and community, to run the school.

I would like to send my best wishes to my team members who are not well. Thankfully and fortunately, I would like to confirm that nobody is seriously ill.

I am incredibly grateful to my Chair of Governors, Dr Helen Snowden, colleagues from NYCC and more recently Public Health England for their support in responding to our situation and in helping me make the important decisions I have to make.

I would also like to add, that I am genuinely heartbroken that after all of the preparation the staff team I made before the start of term and the successful start to the new school year, that I have had to make this decision to temporarily close school. The last thing any of us wanted was for children not to be in school

Despite my extreme frustrations with the testing system capacity, and lack of available capacity within PHE to deal with my calls, I have to say that each individual I have dealt with have been really supportive, helpful and understanding of our situation and have given their expert input and guidance.

Thanks once again for your understanding with this situation – we wish we were not in these circumstances, but have, and will continue to do our very best in these challenging times.

I will be in touch as usual over the next few days and keep you up to date with the situation.

Keep safe everyone,

Kind regards

Jon Watson

Headteacher

In line with the national guidance we recommend that your child/children now stay at home and self-isolate until 14 days after last being in school. (Kestrel, Osprey and Red kites – Thursday 28th September, and Eagle and Harriers Sunday 27th September 2020)

We are asking you to do this to reduce the further spread of COVID 19 to others in the community.

If your child is well at the end of the 14 days period of self-isolation, then they can return to usual activities.

Other members of your household can continue normal activities provided your child does not develop symptoms within the 14-day self-isolation period.

Please see the link to: Guidance for contacts of people with confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection who do not live with the person:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-contacts-of-people-with-possible-or-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19-infection-who-do-not-live-with-the-person>

What to do if your child develops symptoms of COVID 19

If your child develops symptoms of COVID-19, they should remain at home for at least 10 days from the date when their symptoms appeared. Anyone with symptoms will be eligible for testing and this can be arranged via <https://www.nhs.uk/ask-for-a-coronavirus-test> or by calling 119 .

All other household members who remain well must stay at home and not leave the house for 14 days. This includes anyone in your 'Support Bubble'.

The 14-day period starts from the day when the first person in the house became ill.

Household members should not go to work, school or public areas and exercise should be taken within the home. If you require help with buying groceries, other shopping or picking up medication, or walking a dog, you should ask friends or family. Alternatively, you can order your shopping online and medication by phone or online.

Household members staying at home for 14 days will greatly reduce the overall amount of infection the household could pass on to others in the community

If you are able can, move any vulnerable individuals (such as the elderly and those with underlying health conditions) out of your home, to stay with friends or family for the duration of the home isolation period

Please see the link to the PHE 'Stay at Home' Guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

Symptoms of COVID 19

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

- new continuous cough and/or
- high temperature and/or
- 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 does develop symptoms, you can seek advice from NHS 111 at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/check-if-you-have-coronavirus-symptoms/> or by phoning 111.

How to 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.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>