



Dear Parent/Carer,

I thought it would be useful to explain this process to you. I did touch upon it briefly in the information I sent you before the start of term.

If we are informed that one of our staff or students has tested positive for Covid-19, we will inform Public Health England and the Department for Education and take their advice.

The following process will be followed:

- We'll inform the individual who has tested positive regarding what they need to do next and the fact that they must not come into school.
- I'll inform staff but we will maintain confidentiality about the name of the individual concerned.
- We will then follow Public Health England guidance re identifying anyone who came into close contact with the person who tested positive. We will communicate with this group of people (along with their parents and carers, in the case of any students who have been in close contact) regarding next steps. Public Health England will advise us about their definition of 'close contact'.
- We will inform all students and parents/carers that there has been a positive test result, but maintain confidentiality about the name of the individual concerned.
- A statement will be issued to the media.
- The areas the individual has been in within the School will be extensively cleaned.
- Staff who teach any students who have been told to self-isolate will be asked to set work for them online. Separate instructions will be issued to these students. If a member of staff has to self-isolate, they will set work for their students online, if they are well enough to do so. If they cannot, another member of staff will set work.

As you can appreciate, we are currently planning very thoroughly for the possibility of a positive COVID-19 test result. It is almost inevitable that we will have one at some stage.

There will always be rumours during these situations. As a staff, we have a duty to behave professionally and respect confidentiality. Please kindly note that I cannot inform you about a positive case until I have had confirmation that it is a positive case from Public Health England.

I appreciate the current situation causes inevitable anxiety to students, parents/carers and staff, but please try to remain calm. We are following expert advice in dealing with these matters and the safety of our students and staff remains our highest priority.

What are we asking parents/carers to do to help in this situation?

We are relying on parents/carers keeping children at home if they are displaying any symptoms of Covid-19 at all. Please be cautious and if you are in any doubt at all, please keep them at home. If you have taken your child for a test, then it is important that they do not come back into school until they have received a negative test, even if you feel that they no longer have symptoms and appear to be well. We also need you to notify us if your child is being tested, so that we can maintain accurate records, which are then cross checked with Public Health England.

If a student from Higham Lane goes home due to potentially being in contact with someone who has tested positive (in or out of school) to self-isolate for 14 days, they must let the school know if they then develop symptoms during those 14 days please. Thank you.

We have now set up a new email address positivetest@highamlaneschool.co.uk for parents/ carers to report any positive test results as soon as they are able to do so. This email address will be monitored at all times (including out of school hours and at weekends) so that action can be taken swiftly. It is important that you read the following information which has been provided by Public Health England. We are asking you to do this to reduce the further spread of COVID 19 to others in the community.

COVID-19 Symptoms

If your child is well now, they do not need any specific treatment. However, you should be vigilant for any symptoms of COVID-19 infection. The common symptoms of COVID-19 are:

- a high temperature
- a new continuous cough
- loss of sense of taste or smell

If you, or anyone in your family, has these symptoms now or in the future, stay at home for 10 days from when your symptoms started, even if you are mildly unwell. All other members of your household will need to self-isolate for 14 days. This is to protect others in your community. Do not go to a GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital. If you or your child become very unwell then contact NHS 111 for advice. The latest advice is that siblings need to be kept at home with symptomatic (showing symptoms) individuals. This means that if you are keeping one child off school because of symptoms, you must also keep any other children away from school until the symptomatic child has received a negative test. This applies to siblings within the same school or those at different schools. **Testing for people with symptoms is available and more information can be found here:** <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-and-treatment/>

We appreciate that there has been a high demand for tests over recent days.

Precautions

There are things you can do to avoid catching or spreading coronavirus:

- wash your hands with soap and water often – do this for at least 20 seconds
- wash your hands before you leave your home and always wash your hands when you return
- use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available
- 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
- try to avoid close contact with people who are unwell

More information on COVID-19 is available on this website from the NHS and the Government.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-and-treatment/>

Keeping our children and families, staff and local community safe is our highest priority. It is vital that we follow government guidance and the advice from the local Public Health England Health Protection Team.

We appreciate that you may have questions about the situation: if this is the case, please email us at contactus@highamlaneschool.co.uk

Please note that we will not be able to discuss any details relating to the individual cases of students or staff who have had positive Covid-19 tests, but we will do our best to answer any general questions that you may have as promptly as we can.

Thank you for your continued support. These are challenging situations to manage but we have systems in place to enable us to act quickly and for students to switch to remote learning where required.

Yours sincerely,

P.Kelly
Headteacher