



Wednesday 16th September

Dear Parents and Carers

I hope my email finds you well. I apologise for the late hour at which you are receiving this letter. I have been waiting until now to receive an official template letter from Public Health England, London cell, (LCRC), to share with specific families. I have decided to share it with all of our families. Some families received a specific message this morning asking them to keep their daughter/s at home until we received further instruction from LCRC and could make further information available to them.

Yesterday afternoon at 4.30pm, I received a message regarding a confirmed adult case of Coronavirus in school. Please be aware that this person was and remains asymptomatic. I notified Public Health England, London Cell, as is required of me and was told a Clinician would call me to advise me of next steps. I was told it might take a while to receive a response but that I would get one. By 10pm I had not heard anything. I contacted Public Health Barnet, Out of Hours Service. The Consultant *On Call* was very helpful. Together we listed the types of contact that could have been made and individuals involved with each type of contact, according to the official *rapid risk assessment*. We identified some staff and some students who may have been in varying degrees of contact with the adult and took the decision to err on the side of caution and ask everyone we identified to stay at home today. These were the families who were contacted today by text message.

Having had no response by 11.30pm last night, I worked with colleagues to prepare and set up an early morning message to those involved. The Consultant was working from guidance papers which deemed it not necessary to keep a whole year group bubble at home.

Today I did not receive a call from LCRC. I rang them again after lunch and was told that they have been inundated with calls, more than I could imagine and that the service was understaffed. I was also told that our case had been listed as a priority for response. I shared my concerns and listed questions that I would need answered to reassure our school community that everyone's Health and Safety was being safeguarded in light of any risk to which some of its members had been exposed. I was told that someone would call me today.

At approximately 5pm today I received a call from Public Health Barnet to follow up on what LCRC had told me today. Today's On Call Consultant was astonished that I had not heard anything in 24 hours. The Consultant said she would follow up with LCRC and that I should call her tomorrow to report on progress with that communication. The Consultant also told me that the DfE is launching a new unit tomorrow to support all of this. I was advised that in the absence of further guidance from Public Health England, the same students who had been asked to stay home today should continue to do so.

Subsequently, Public Health Barnet have provided me with a template letter tonight, to issue to those families who were messaged this morning to keep their daughter/s at home. I have decided to share the letter with the whole school community, as I am aware that students and families have shared information today which has caused confusion to some about whether their daughter is safe in school and whether she should have also stayed at home today.



You will appreciate that in the current climate, a similar situation may well arise again. We all need to act responsibly to support students and staff to continue high quality learning and teaching at school, rather than at home. Since our return to school, we have adhered fully to the school's Covid Risk Assessment and the specified control measures. This has meant that the current case has been contained to ensure the safety of our school community.

Provision will be made for students who are self-isolating to maintain their learning; teachers will be uploading material on Google classroom and marking work that is submitted via Google assignment. Students will also be able to communicate with their teachers via the 'Stream' section of Google Classroom. Information on working at home during periods of self-isolation will be shared with students in due course.

If you did not receive a text message at around 7am this morning, your daughter should continue to come to school as normal. The remainder of this letter is relevant only to those families who received a text message from the school this morning.

Here follows the Public Health template letter *Re: Coronavirus disease COVID-19 Confirmed case in School*, currently intended only for specific families who received a text message this morning to keep their daughter/s at home:

This letter is to inform you that an adult at school has tested positive for COVID-19. This morning some families received a message that their daughter in Year 11, 12 or 13, may have had contact with the adult last Friday. Public Health Barnet and National Test and Trace teams say this is the only day with which we need to be concerned. The adult has not been in school this week.

In line with the national guidance, **if you received a text message this morning**, your daughter should stay at home and self-isolate until Friday 25th September, when she can return to school. We are asking this to reduce the further spread of COVID-19 to others in the community. If your daughter is well at the end of the 14 day period of self-isolation, then she can return to usual activities.

Other members of your household can continue normal activities and **sisters of those who are self-isolating can come to school**, provided your daughter/s who are self-isolating do not develop symptoms within the 14-day self-isolation period. Your daughter should not leave the house for any reason whilst self-isolating. If she develops any symptom then her sister must start a 14 day self-isolation period from the day the first symptom appears.

Please see the link below to the PHE Staying 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>

What to do if your self-isolating daughter/s develop symptoms of COVID 19

If they develop symptoms of COVID-19, they should remain at home for at least 10 days from the date when the symptoms appeared. All other household members who remain well must stay at home and not leave the house for 14 days.



The 14-day period for household members 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 within this 14 day period.

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, 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.

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, your normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia)

For most people, coronavirus (COVID-19) will be a mild illness.

If any household member 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/>

Yours faithfully

Violet Walker
Headteacher