

30th November 2020

Dear Parents / Carers

As you are aware, during the last couple of weeks the school has unfortunately experienced the impact of several positive coronavirus cases. I understand your concerns and am writing to you to provide more information about the procedures we are instructed to follow when we receive notification of a positive case of coronavirus. I want to reassure families that we make the decisions following the advice given by Public Health and the DfE. Our utmost priority at all times is to ensure the safety of our staff and students. It is disappointing when we have to send students home in order to self-isolate but we are able to switch to an effective online learning provision. Below are some frequently asked questions; if there are any further queries regarding COVID, please email response@northallertonschool.org.uk.

What happens when you receive a notification of a positive test? What is the process for contact tracing?

We will initially speak with the family and establish the timeline that is necessary to contact trace. We identify who the student has been in 'close contact' with during the contagious period, when in school. We use this information to identify close contact friendship groups and use lesson seating plans to inform us which students will need to self-isolate. Once all of the information has been collated regarding the thresholds for direct or proximity contact with the affected individual I then discuss these with the DfE and the Local Health Protection Team. Advice is given on which students need to isolate at home. Their isolation begins from the last day they could have had contact with the student. The school will contact the parents of any students who are identified as a close contact and therefore required to self-isolate.

Wherever possible, efforts are made to avoid sending a whole year group home. This is easier in lower year group pods as they are taught a number of lessons in the same class, in the same room. It becomes more complicated in Y10 and Y11 due to the grouping combinations and specialist subjects the students need to access. Please see this poster for parents for reference: [NYCC - What happens if there is a case of coronavirus in your school](#)

Is a POD the same as a Bubble?

We use the phrase 'pod' or 'bubble', they are interchangeable, to describe each year group as this is how they have been organised in our school. Our pod system is clearly vitally important in preventing the closure of the whole school.

What measures has the school got in place to reduce and minimise the transmission of the virus?

Please can I remind you to refer to our 'Covid-19' tab on the school's website. This provides a variety of information detailing the measures the school has put in place: <https://www.northallertonschool.org.uk/covid-19/>

What is the school's approach to Blended Learning?

Blended learning is the term we use to describe a model by which we combine lessons in school with online work at home. This is how we will ensure that we are able to provide work for students during the Covid-19 crisis. With so many possible situations, how blended learning looks will vary depending on the pod system and key stage. We have created year-group specific guidance sheets that are sent to parents when students need to self-isolate. These guidance sheets set out our expectations of students and their teachers for blended learning.

In situations where we have a whole pod or whole class absent, we are usually able to deliver lessons live using CISCO Webex. It is possible to do this because the teacher is able to concentrate fully on the online lesson. In



situations where there are some students self-isolating and the rest are physically in the classroom it is much more difficult to run live lessons, but in all cases our teachers are expected to upload the lesson materials onto Google Classroom for the students to access from home.

What can parents do to support the prevention of transmission?

Please see below the most recent advice received from Public Health for parents:

- please remind your child about our policy on face coverings.
- limit the number of people they walk to/from school with.
- remind your child about continuing to socially distance during lunchtimes e.g. if they are allowed out of school.
- please remind your child to leave school in a timely manner to avoid social contacts.
- please make sure your child attends school in usual uniform with an appropriate coat for winter conditions.
- please remember the school 'pods' do not apply outside of school (i.e. children should avoid mixing with friends outside of school, even if they are in the same 'pod' at school).

Message to pass on to parents/carers about self-isolation

If you are self-isolating:

- please ensure that if you or a member of your family has Covid symptoms or has been asked to self-isolate (e.g. if they are a close contact of someone who has tested positive) that you and your household follow the self-isolation guidelines.
- please do not send a child to school if they or a member of their household has symptoms, or if they have been asked to self-isolate.
- please follow the national guidance:
 - for individuals who have tested positive or who live in the same household as someone who is positive for covid-19: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>
 - for close contacts who do NOT live in the same household: <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/guidance-for-contacts-of-people-with-possible-or-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19-infection-who-do-not-live-with-the-person>
- If you require any further support (e.g. shopping, medication) whilst you are self-isolating please visit <https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/help-you-during-coronavirus-covid-19> for further information.

I wish to thank everyone for your continued support during these challenging times.

Yours sincerely

Mrs V. E. Rahn
Head of School