

CWA/KRE/MBE

9 November 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

Re: A COVID-19 Student Case Linked to the Academy

Earlier this afternoon, the academy was informed by one of our parents that their child had today tested positive for COVID-19. This was after taking a test yesterday despite none of the main COVID-19 symptoms being displayed. The student is from our Year 7 cohort and Mill Road Campus.

Now I know that after receiving this news so soon after receiving the letter about one of our staff members – a non-teaching staff member who is only based at our Fambridge Road Campus and who does not work with Year 7 and 8 students - you will be somewhat concerned and understandably so. However, as was the case last evening, please be assured that from the moment I was made aware, my senior team and I again, activated our previously established and pre-tested contingency plans which included speaking at length with both the Department for Education (DfE) as well as the Essex Contact Tracing Team (ECTT). Interestingly, after taking some time to get through on this occasion, both, especially the ECTT, said it had been an incredibly busy day for them. Nevertheless, after doing so, it has been established that one staff member and 17 Year 7 students, five of whom we erred on the side of caution with and as we will always look to do with regards this ongoing matter, will now need to self-isolate for a period of 14 days. All of their parents and carers have already been contacted by members of my senior team and as expected, the measured and considered input from them was typical of how our families have reacted throughout the COVID-19 period thus far; something my colleagues and I continue to very much appreciate as well as greatly respect.

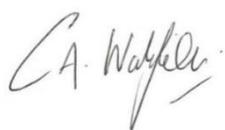
Whilst continuing in the spirit of open and transparent communication, I also feel it important to share with you that there is a meticulous process the academy, the DfE and ECTT have to work through when it comes to carefully identifying potential 'close contacts'. Therefore, if your child or any of our other colleagues have not already been notified about being one of these, then they can continue coming into the academy and carry on with their daily programme of work and study as long as they feel well enough to do so of course.

My next point is one I have taken some time to consider, however, after doing so, I would now like to say to you, our parents and carers, and which I continue to be immensely proud to be myself, that throughout this very challenging period, I have always felt – and still feel – that ultimately, it is for you to make the decision as to whether you wish for your child to come to school. I also remain acutely aware and speak to many of you every day, including this evening, about the fact that a number of you are clinically vulnerable yourselves, have an elderly relative who lives with you who is, or are continuing to look after a relative or close family friend who is. Therefore, I know there are real, continuing worries and anxieties with regards such matters. **Therefore, I am stating that should you be in such a position or are worried to the point that you do not feel it safe to allow your child to come into the academy during this second lockdown period, you have my full support to make the decision to keep them at home instead.** If you do, however, I would ask that you call into our attendance team before 8:25am each and every day to leave a message to clarify that your child will be absent and a reason as to why. This is so as to ensure we fulfil our daily safeguarding requirements.

This morning's letter, as well as numerous previous correspondences, highlighted exactly what to do if your child develops any one of the three main COVID-19 symptoms moving forward whilst also clarifying our core in-academy protocols aimed at keeping the academy's stakeholders as safe as possible whilst they are in our care. Again, including today, from what I have personally seen after walking the corridors, playgrounds, canteens and venturing into classrooms, staff and students alike continue to adhere to these exceptionally well and my input in terms of reminding them about following these remains somewhat rare. However, your continued support with regards to further embedding these would only be greatly appreciated.

To conclude, thank you for taking the time to read this further COVID-19 related letter which again, I know may well have caused further worry, consternation and even upset, however, let us only look to continue working alongside each other and in collaboration so as to ensure we get through these ongoing challenging times and together, overcome whatever issue, concern or challenge manifests or comes our way.

Yours sincerely



Mr C A Wakefield
Executive Principal

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