

CWA/KRE/MBE

16 December 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

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

The academy has been informed that one of our post 16 students had today tested positive for COVID-19. This was after taking the test yesterday and not being in the academy since Monday.

As we did with our previous cases, from the moment I was made aware at 10:40am, members of the senior team and I activated our associated contingency plans which included speaking with the Essex Contact Tracing Team (ECTT). After taking some time to do so (as initially we had to leave a message due to them receiving an extremely high volume of calls from across the county once again today), they verified that our investigations and actions, especially with regards any identified close contacts, were accurate and in line with the latest associated advisory guidance.

Therefore, it has been established and verified that one staff member and 14 Year 12 students, some of whom we once again, 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 10 days. All of their parents and carers have also now been contacted by members of our senior team and as expected and as was the case on previous occasions, the measured, considered and supportive input from them, as well as our identified College students themselves, was typical of how our families have reacted throughout the COVID-19 period thus far; something my colleagues and I, as I have said many times before, genuinely continue to very much appreciate as well as greatly value at the same time.

I also feel it important to reiterate an important point made in my previous notification letters in that there is a meticulous process the academy, ECTT and the Department for Education have to work through when it comes to carefully identifying potential 'close contacts'. **Therefore, if your child has not already been notified about being one of these, 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.**

However, another very important point I would like to further reiterate is that I have always felt – and still strongly feel – that ultimately, it is for you to make the decision as to whether you wish for your child to come to school during these ongoing times. With this very much in mind, I know that many of you are extremely worried about the current escalating COVID-19 situation in the district, especially with the festive season fast approaching and with you and your children very much looking forward to seeing and spending some precious time with relatives you have not seen in many cases since early March.

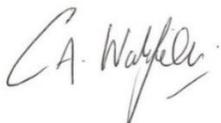
Therefore, whilst my colleagues and I will endeavour to continue doing our very best over the final 1 ½ days of the autumn term, **I will support you with whatever decision you ultimately make with regards your child's attendance until Friday.**

If it is to keep your child out of the academy, I would politely ask that you call our absence line before 8:30am tomorrow and Friday 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 attendance-related safeguarding protocols.

Many of my previous letters have all highlighted exactly what to do if you, your child or a member of your family unit develops any one of the three main COVID-19 symptoms moving forward. This is whilst also clarifying our core in-house protocols aimed at keeping the academy's stakeholders as safe as possible whilst they are in our care. From what I continue to see after walking the corridors, playgrounds, canteens and venturing into the classrooms of both campuses on a daily basis, staff and students alike continue to adhere to these exceptionally well and my input in terms of reminding them about following these continues to be somewhat limited. However, your support with regards to further embedding these would only continue to be greatly appreciated moving forward and especially as we look to close out a very long term as safely and effectively as possible.

To conclude, thank you for taking the time to read this further COVID-19 related letter which again, I know may well have caused worry and consternation, however, let us only look to continue working alongside each other and in collaboration so as to ensure we work through these ongoing demanding 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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