

CWA/KRE/MBE

11 November 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

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

Earlier today, 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. The student is from our Year 7 cohort and Mill Road Campus and is a separate case and **not** directly linked to the Year 7 case I wrote to you about on Monday.

As we did with the previous two cases, from the moment I was made aware, my senior team and I activated our associated contingency plans which included speaking at length with the Essex Contact Tracing Team (ECTT). After taking some time to get through to them due to the fact that by 9:55am this morning they stated we were the 31st school in the county to be ringing to report a linked case already today (48 separate school-linked cases reported on Monday at the point we called through), ECTT said it had remained an incredibly busy week with regards COVID-19 cases and related phone calls.

Nevertheless, after doing so, and talking through our detailed senior team led investigations, it has been established and verified that one staff member and 23 Year 7 students, a number 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 and until Tuesday 24 November 2020. All of their parents and carers have already been contacted by members of my senior team and as expected and as was the case on Monday, the measured, considered and supportive 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.

I also feel it important to reiterate to you another important point made in my last letter in that there is a meticulous process the academy, ECTT and/or the DfE 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.

An even more important point I would like to reiterate is that again, 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 today, 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. Also, that within your own family units, some of you are also having to deal with managing non-academy related positive test situations. Therefore, I know there are real, continuing worries and anxieties with regards such matters, **however, I am reiterating the point 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 pursue such a pathway, 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.

Many of my previous letters have highlighted exactly what to do if your child, you or a member of your family unit 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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