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Sunday 20 March 2022

Dear Parents and Carers,

I write further to my [letter of 25 February](#) to update you on the coronavirus situation in the College. As we have done throughout the whole of the pandemic, we continue to keep the safety of our staff, students, and families paramount. We continue to carefully monitor local transmission rates, follow HM Government guidance, and liaise with the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) and local Directors of public health. In recent weeks, the number of positive COVID-19 cases in the College has increased, doubling each week, to the extent that as of writing, there are over 80 positive cases amongst students and staff. This reflects the increase in cases [locally](#) and [nationally](#) due — it appears — to the increased growth rate of the Omicron variant sub-lineage BA.2.

Given this local situation, and the associated increase in cases in the College, the UKHSA have advised that I write to you to inform you of the current position, remind you of key controls to mitigate further transmission, and to forewarn you that if it becomes operationally impossible (in terms of safe staffing levels) to continue to offer full-time face to face education, we may need, as a last resort, to restrict attendance via partial closure. This means that specific year groups may be required to stay at home and receive remote learning, and access to after school activities may also be limited. We have worked very hard throughout the pandemic to avoid restricting attendance in this way, but if it becomes necessary to do so in the coming weeks, we will of course contact you as speedily as practicably possible.

If your child tests positive for COVID-19, please follow HM Government [advice](#) and ensure that your child stays at home. An LFD test should be taken (order them [here](#)) from 5 days after their symptoms started (or the day their test was taken if they did not have symptoms) followed by another one the next day. If both test results are negative, they should return to school, if they are well enough to do so, i.e., they are fever free for at least 24 hours and have recovered from acute symptoms. You should also let people your child has been in close contact with know about their positive test result so that they can follow [guidance](#).

If your child has coronavirus symptoms a PCR test should be arranged and your child should stay at home while awaiting the result.

If your child is a close contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, they should avoid contact with anyone they know who is at higher risk of becoming severely unwell if they are infected with COVID-19. They should limit close contact with other people outside their household, and wear a well-fitting face covering in crowded, enclosed, or poorly ventilated spaces, including in classrooms, corridors, and indoor communal areas for 10 days from the date of last contact. They should pay attention to COVID symptoms and test and isolate if they develop a cough, temperature, or loss of or change to taste or smell.

Face coverings are strongly advised to be worn by students, staff, and visitors, temporarily, in corridors and communal areas, and in coaches and/or taxis. Students and staff may also choose to wear face coverings in classrooms should they wish to do so.

We will maintain existing control measures to reduce risk, including ensuring good hygiene for everyone, maintaining appropriate enhanced cleaning regimes, keeping occupied spaces well ventilated, maintaining the one-way system of movement within corridors, keeping separate venues for each key stage for break and lunch times, and maintaining consistent seating plans in all lessons. We also encourage vaccination uptake and remind you that we have confirmed administration of 2nd doses (and 1st doses if not already received) to take place onsite at the College on 23 and 24 March.

I thank you sincerely once again for your continued support. As always, if you have any questions or would like to discuss any matter outlined in this letter further, please do not hesitate to contact us; we will endeavour to respond as quickly as we can.

I will write again in the coming weeks with further updates, and to clarify the new arrangements when the further changes scheduled to come into effect nationally from 1 April are confirmed.

With my warmest wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C Griffiths', with a horizontal line underneath.

Craig Griffiths (Principal).