

Dear Parent/Carers,

I write to update you with the latest information further to my communication yesterday, considering the updates announced by government yesterday evening.

Let me firstly reassure you that we are working very hard to support students and their families through this difficult, extraordinary and uncertain time. We are following government guidance, are constantly monitoring the ever-changing situation, and have been in regular contact with the Department for Education to ensure that we are able to advise families appropriately. We will be liaising closely with all relevant bodies — Devon County Council, the NHS, and the Department of Health and Social Care and Public Health England — and will keep you updated as necessary.

It is important that you know that there have not been any — and are currently no — COVID-19 cases at the college to our knowledge. If there were, or are, the Public Health England Health Protection Team would liaise with us to undertake a risk assessment and advise on any actions or precautions that should be taken. We have some students and staff in self-isolation, as advised by the NHS, because they have symptoms of coronavirus, but no-one to our knowledge has symptoms that have been confirmed as COVID-19 through testing. Please remember also that currently only those with symptoms who are at most risk of severe illness from the virus will be tested (www.gov.uk/government/news/coronavirus-testing). Please note also that no-one will be diagnosed with COVID-19 over the telephone; diagnosis can only come from actual physical testing.

To this end, until any changes to current guidance, students who are not showing symptoms of coronavirus should continue to attend school as normal. For other students, in order to reassure you, I outline current guidance below.

Absences from school

- (1) If your child has symptoms of coronavirus, i.e. a new, continuous dry cough (less than a week old) and/or raised temperature, they will need to be kept at home in self-isolation. The absence would of course be authorised and deemed 'exceptional circumstances'. As per current advice from the Department of Health and Social Care and Public Health England, self-isolation will be for 14 days from the day when the student became ill. (Please note that we will contact you if we become aware of any child developing a dry cough and/or high temperature during the school day, and they will need to be collected immediately. We will keep them in isolation until you collect them.)
- (2) If someone in your household has symptoms of coronavirus, i.e. a new, continuous dry cough (less than a week old) and/or raised temperature, your child will need to be kept at home in self-isolation. The absence would of course be authorised and deemed 'exceptional circumstances'. As per current advice from the Department of Health and Social Care and Public Health England, self-isolation will be for 14 days from the day when the first person in the household became ill. (If anyone in the household starts displaying symptoms during such self-isolation, they would need to stay at home for 7 days from when their symptoms appeared, regardless of what day they are on in the original 14-day isolation period.)
- (3) If you have chosen to keep your child in self-isolation because they or someone in their household is at increased risk of severe illness from coronavirus because of an underlying health issue (specified by government as those listed in the link that follows), the absence would be deemed 'exceptional circumstances' and we would authorise it. www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-social-distancing-and-for-

[vulnerable-people/guidance-on-social-distancing-for-everyone-in-the-uk-and-protecting-older-people-and-vulnerable-adults](#)

- (4) Absences from school for other reasons will be addressed in the normal manner.

Potential school closure

To reiterate my communication yesterday, currently, there are no plans to close the College unless the Government decide to close all schools nationally. However, levels of staff absence may mean that we may need to alter or reduce the provision that is available, or, indeed, close the school. Public Health England currently state that they 'will rarely advise a school to close but this may be necessary if there are so many staff being isolated that the school has operational issues.' Decisions in relation to this will be made daily, in liaison with the Local Authority and Public Health England.

I again reassure you that as a College we have been working on plans to ensure we can continue to provide education and learning for our students remotely in the event of any closure. We continue to develop our capacity to ensure that our students are provided with appropriate work and resources should the school be closed in the coming weeks. We will continue to use Class Charts as a means of setting work, alongside the use of the various online learning platforms students are already used to utilising (e.g. vle.mathswatch.co.uk, www.senecalearning.com, sparx.co.uk/maths, etc.), and are looking at what measures we are able to put in place to support students who don't have internet access at home, or can only access platforms on a mobile. As such, in the first instance:

- We are sending out the login details for Class Charts again so that all parents and students can log in to this app where work will be set.
- Your child should ensure that they know and has recorded all their login details to the various online learning platforms they use.
- Students will need to familiarise themselves with using 'Microsoft Teams', which is part of the Office365 suit of programmes that they have access to via their Office365 login.

Examinations

I try again to reassure you that we are monitoring the situation closely and are adhering to current guidance and advice from Ofqual (you can find their latest advice in the link that follows). Ofqual's current advice is 'to continue to prepare for exams and other assessments as normal'. To this end, if your child is due to take examinations this summer, it is important that they continue working to their revision as normally as possible, and to not presuppose events. We will, of course, update you if there are any changes to the guidance.

Links to current advice

- NHS Health information and advice
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>
- Guidance for educational settings on COVID-19
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19>
- Ofqual statement on coronavirus re Examinations
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/updated-statement-on-coronavirus>

- Stay at home guidance for households with possible coronavirus (COVID-19) infection
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>
- Guidance for those who are at increased risk of severe illness from coronavirus (COVID-19)
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-social-distancing-and-for-vulnerable-people/guidance-on-social-distancing-for-everyone-in-the-uk-and-protecting-older-people-and-vulnerable-adults>

I thank you very much for your continued support. If you have any further concerns that you feel we may be able to help with, please do not hesitate to contact us. And most importantly, look after yourselves.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Brett', is placed over a white rectangular area.

Derrick Brett
Principal