



6 November 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

General update – Covid-19, Face coverings and rotas, Clinically extremely vulnerable pupils, Year 11 revision microsite and resources, Sixth Form Virtual Open Week, Examinations – Plan B

National lockdown 2 has begun. A phrase I hoped not to have to write after the summer. However, we have gone about our business in a sensible and methodical manner this week. It hasn't been without its challenges but I feel a sense of pride in seeing the teamwork, camaraderie and high levels of professionalism from my staff team.

Whilst the roads have been a bit quieter on the journey in and out of North Hykeham, it feels like business as usual for us and so it should be. I hope it remains that way and we can carry on doing what we do best.

Covid-19

As I write, the infection rate in North Kesteven has risen yet again, as has the national average. When I last wrote to you, there were 132 cases per 100,000 people. It now stands at 192 cases. The national average is 156. The infection rate in Lincoln has dropped a little. This now stands at 239 cases per 100,000. The last time I wrote it stood at 280. This is a small glimmer of encouragement in the hope that lockdown seriously dampens the spread.

You may be aware that the national guidance for schools was updated this week to reflect our expected response to lockdown. Interestingly, we received it late on Wednesday, giving us limited time to make any necessary changes. As it turns out, we were already implementing the recommendations anyway so limited change has been needed.

Face coverings and rotas

Face coverings will be mandatory in communal areas of secondary schools. They will still not be recommended in classrooms. I allowed myself a wry smile when I read this. As you will be well aware, we have been doing this since September. The only difference now is that it is a national expectation. This vindicates our vigilant and proactive position in my view and allows us some satisfaction that our safety measures far outweigh those in most schools up and down the country.

Face coverings will be mandatory for pupils in Year 7 and over on dedicated school transport. This has been the case for some time but without youngsters being challenged. When I am on duty at the end of the day I always try to check the buses as they leave and challenge anyone

not wearing a mask who belongs to SRPA. The hope is that we see the transport companies following suit now that they have the power to do so.

This is not mentioned in the guidance itself, but we understand from discussions with the DfE that no school will be formally asked to implement a rota system if staff isolations rise or there are numerous cases in a school. Informally, we've been told that the government "recognises that staffing issues may make it difficult for an individual school to remain fully open at all times, and that some compromises may need to be made." Given this, if we were to face challenges which meant I could not keep the Academy open to a specific year group or groups, I would discuss this with the Governing Body and let you know with instructions as to next steps. In short, once I have a plan, you will be the first to know. Let's hope it doesn't come to that and we can ride this out together.

Clinically extremely vulnerable pupils

Pupils who have been identified by their doctor as still considered clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV), will be advised not to come into school. The [government guidance](#) on shielding and CEV people has been updated to reflect this position. We will provide remote learning for any pupils in this category. You should receive a letter from the NHS if your child is CEV to share with us. It is helpful for us to have this information as soon as you have it so that we can work together to ensure we operate in the best way.

Pupils who live with people who are CEV, but are not CEV themselves, are still expected to come into school.

If any member of the family tests positive for Covid-19 or is awaiting a test result whilst displaying symptoms, please do not attempt to send your child to school regardless of this. We are duty bound to ensure the safety of the wider academy community and this would be creating unnecessary risk.

In addition, I was contacted by a parent today to inform me that her son in Year 7 had been stopped by the local PCSOs on the way home from school for being in a group outside larger than two. This is in response to the change in national guidance which states that 'you can meet one other person from outside your household in an outdoors public space.' This is a simple FYI in case the local constabulary are taking this approach. I will ensure that my staff teams are aware so that appropriate advice can be given in school.

Finally on Covid, whilst I will always help where I can, I cannot advise you on Covid matters that do not relate to the Academy. This week I have been asked to provide advice related to sports clubs in the community, whether someone's relative should book a test or not and to offer opinion about other unrelated medical matters which are affected by Covid. I would



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always advise anyone asking such questions to contact the relevant club or seek qualified medical advice so please do not be upset if I explain that I cannot answer your question.

If any parents have any concerns at all related to Covid-19 in school, please contact us at the Academy using the email address COVID@srpa.co.uk. This will make it directly to me where I will be able to help and will do my best to prioritise your concern.

Year 11 revision microsite and resources

The Frog microsite for Year 11 revision is now live and can be found here: <https://vle.srpa.co.uk/app/os>. Just search for Year 11.

Further resources will be made available from next week too in order to support our students with their mock examinations very soon.

Sixth Form Virtual Open Week

It was lovely to hold our first live Q&A for September 2021 entry into the sixth form this week. Along with our microsite for current Year 11 students to access, this was our first opportunity to talk to parents too. We intend to hold another live Q&A on Wednesday 25 November to coincide with the closing of the application process. We will publish instructions in order to access this next week.

The Frog microsite can be accessed here: <https://vle.srpa.co.uk/virtual-6th-form-open-day/home>. Should you have any questions about applying for a sixth form place, please contact Mr Griffiths at jgriffiths@srpa.co.uk.

Examinations – Plan B

I have started to receive some understandable questions about examinations next summer and ‘what if’ scenarios. I am part of a national group of Heads lobbying the DfE for further clarity in relation to this. In short, there is currently no Plan B for if examinations cannot go ahead. By now, I would have expected one. As usual, we will plan rigorously to ensure we ‘futureproof’ as many scenarios as we can possible envisage given the shifting sands at the moment. However, as I write, the plan remains that all examinations will go ahead ‘come hell or high water.’ I hope to hear more before Christmas....

This week has been tough. It is only week one of the half term. It feels like a long while before we will be putting up any Christmas lights and it is going to be a long half term if every week is like this one. Yet again, my staff team deserve some praise. This week they have pulled out all of the stops. My student body have also been great. To have them back in the building feels super and reminds me why I became a teacher. The overwhelming majority behave stunningly well and are fantastic ambassadors for my Academy. There are, understandably, some



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nervous looking faces at the moment as they continue to attend school in an unprecedented second lockdown. I feel your fear and trepidation and I understand it. I am learning too. But, as one teacher said to me yesterday "We've got this. We've come so far and we can't lose faith now."

I couldn't put it any better and that is my quote for the week. Try to keep smiling, have faith that we are in this with you and have a lovely weekend when it comes.

I will write again soon.

Yours faithfully



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Head Teacher



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