

22 December 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

I am writing to you to provide a brief update on the coronavirus cases within the school community at Vyners. We have experienced a sharp increase in the number of positive cases within the past week and have received emails from parents confirming positive tests this morning. At this point, we have contacted all families of children who have been identified as close contacts and are required to self isolate.

I had a telephone conversation with a health expert from Public Health England (PHE) yesterday evening. She has confirmed that there has been a sharp rise in cases within the wider community, which is being mirrored in school communities. The main reasons provided are that there have been a significant increase in the number of tests undertaken at the end of the school term (including asymptomatic tests) which has meant more positive tests generally and, that the new strain of the virus does appear to be much more contagious (between 70-75% more contagious than previous strains) and that it does seem to be spreading amongst school aged children in a similar manner that previous strains have spread amongst the adult population.

Whilst we will await further advice regarding the return to school in January I have been asked to advise all families to take additional precautions on each and every occasion that you leave the home e.g. visiting supermarkets, travelling to work, etc. The '*Hands, Face, Space*' message remains essential but it is important that this guidance is followed stringently at all times even when face masks are being worn or you are in an outdoor setting. I have added the PHE/NHS guidance to the end of this email.

I very much appreciate that this information will be concerning to many of you. Please be reassured that for most people, coronavirus (COVID-19) will be a mild illness.

I will write to you again during the week beginning 4 January to provide further information regarding the arrangements for the start of term. Whilst it is important that you do share the key messages in this email with your family and friends I would very much appreciate that this email is not shared on social media.

Best wishes

Gary Mullings
Headteacher

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What to do if your child develops symptoms of COVID 19:

If your child develops symptoms of COVID-19, they should remain at home for at least 10 days from the date when their symptoms appeared.

All other household members who remain well must stay at home and not leave the house for 10 days.

The 10-day period starts from the day when the first person in the house became ill.

Household members should not go to work, school or public areas and exercise should be taken within the home.

Household members staying at home for 10 days will greatly reduce the overall amount of infection the household could pass on to others in the community.

If you are able, move any vulnerable individuals (such as the elderly and those with underlying health conditions) out of your home, to stay with friends or family for the duration of the home isolation period.

Symptoms

The most common symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are recent onset of:

- new continuous cough and/or
- high temperature
- a loss of, or change in, normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia)

For most people, coronavirus (COVID-19) will be a mild illness.

If your child or anyone in the household does develop symptoms, you can seek advice from NHS 111 at:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/> or by phoning 111.

How to stop COVID-19 spreading

There are things you can do to help reduce the risk of you and anyone you live with getting ill with COVID-19.

Hands

- Wash your hands regularly and for at least 20 seconds.

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Face

- Cover your face in enclosed spaces, especially where social distancing may be difficult and where you will come into contact with people you do not normally meet.
- It is now compulsory to wear cloth face coverings on public transport, shops and several other indoor settings.

Space

- Stay 2 metres apart where possible, or 1 metre with extra precautions in place.
- Keep your distance from people who are outside your household or support bubble.
- Limit social gatherings and avoid crowded places.

Further Information

Further information is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus/education-and-childcare>

If somebody in your household does develop symptoms, you can seek advice from NHS 111 at:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/> or by phoning 111.

How to stop COVID-19 spreading

There are things you can do to help reduce the risk of you and anyone you live with getting ill with COVID-19.

Do

- wash your hands with soap and water often – do this for at least 20 seconds
- use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available
- wash your hands as soon as you get home
- cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze
- put used tissues in the bin immediately and wash your hands afterwards

Further Information

Further Information Further information is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19>

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