



Saturday, 21 November 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

Re: Advice from Public Health England (PHE)

As you are aware, schools work closely with PHE who monitor the local transmission rates of coronavirus (COVID19) and how they impact upon schools.

Over recent months, the local transmission rates have increased and since the half-term break a small number of families have notified the school that their child has tested positive for COVID19 and consequently is self-isolating. The school has consulted PHE regarding the precise circumstances of each case and in those cases where the pupil may have been present at school when infectious, PHE have advised that 'proximity contacts' (i.e. those who have possibly spent time close to the affected pupil) are asked to self-isolate for 14 days (from the last date of possible 'contact'). This practice is in keeping with the NHS 'Track and Trace' approach.

However, yesterday evening the advice from the PHE COVID-19 Response Team was updated to recommend that the school asks **all pupils in Year 11 to self-isolate with immediate effect up to (and including) 29 November; and then to return to school on Monday, 30 November 2020**. The Practitioner from PHE explained that while the measured increase in cases in the community would account for many cases in schools, steps must be taken to limit the opportunities for any further transmission. At Springfield, the majority of confirmed cases recently reported to the school by families have been in the Year 11 age group and a number of possible 'proximity contacts' have already been asked to self-isolate for this period. It is, therefore, the Year 11 'bubble' that needs to close temporarily as a precautionary measure.

The Governors and I believe that it is essential to implement this recommendation, based on the on-going discussions that we have been having with the PHE team, in order to keep our and the broader community as safe as possible; and in accordance with the school's risk assessment. While it is difficult and disheartening to have to make such decisions for our school, we know that families will understand that we must continue to prioritise everyone's safeguarding during these very challenging times.

Consequently, all Year 11 pupils need to follow the self-isolation guidance (please refer to the information sent with this letter to Year 11 families) and not return to school until Monday, 30 November. If this intervention is to be successful, it is essential that all Year

11 pupils follow this guidance and that their parents/carers support the school by ensuring that their child does not mix with other pupils (or households) at any time. Similarly, pupils in all year groups should not be mixing with other pupils (or households) outside of school in accordance with current national 'lockdown' restrictions.

Work will be set remotely for Year 11 pupils who should refer to the remote learning page of the school's website for further information: <https://springfield.uk.net/index.php/learning/remote-learning> We know that our Year 11 pupils will have questions regarding their forthcoming mocks and other elements of school work and we will write to Year 11 families with more information at the start of next week.

A challenge facing everyone is that people can be infectious with COVID-19 for approximately two days before any symptoms may appear; and in some cases may not even develop any significant symptoms at all. Consequently, we would encourage everyone to remain vigilant for the symptoms of COVID-19, however mildly these may initially appear. Should your child start to develop symptoms (persistent cough and/or high temperature and/or a loss of or change in their normal sense of taste or smell) they must not come to school; please follow the advice on self-isolation and arrange to get a test for your child.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested>

I can confirm that pupils in years 7, 8, 9 and 10 should continue to attend school as normal next week unless they have specifically been asked to self-isolate by the school and/or are following Government/NHS guidance on self-isolation. Thank you for your ongoing support in reinforcing the key 'hands/space/face' messages with your child, i.e. the importance of thorough and regular handwashing, maintaining a distance from others where possible and wearing a face mask in busy, communal spaces at school (and elsewhere, where required).

Further information relating to COVID-19 is available on the school's website: <https://springfield.uk.net/index.php/school-life/coronavirus-information> Other queries should be directed to the DfE coronavirus helpline, please (telephone: 0800 046 8687).

Yours sincerely



Ms S F Spivey
CEO, Headteacher