

Truro School COVID Steering Group Bulletin No.6 (16 Oct 2020)

The school has had another busy and productive week alongside our first Covid case of term. Last weekend we enacted our positive case responses as soon as notification was received, including communication with parents. I am grateful to the family concerned for acting quickly, to colleagues who responded calmly, including over the weekend, and to all pupils, parents, and staff, for your patience and support. All our actions were approved by Public Health England and we are now at the end of a week that has still seen learning and teaching for all, on site and off.

Currently, this remains a single isolated case, the required 14-day isolation period exists and is important because an infection can emerge at any point across that time. Covid is a local, national, and international pandemic, and whilst we manage risk on the school site, we are not able to manage risk outside it. School safety measures, as robust as they are, cannot guarantee no further occurrence.

I am keen to provide a bit more detail about how we tracked and traced. Our approach, as advised by PHE, was to focus on the 48-hour period before symptoms for the affected child were first noticed, and the identification of close contacts, defined by the government as having face-to-face contact with someone less than a metre away (even if a face-covering or face-mask is worn) or being within 2 metres of an infected person for 15 minutes or more.

The link [HERE](#) is to a PowerPoint kindly prepared by Mrs Ellison that we shared with pupils this week to educate and reassure them over the steps we took.

The outcome was a picture of proven or suspected close contacts across the 48-hour period that totalled significantly less than 50% of the year group concerned. We were hence able to invite back into school well over 50% of the year group, and continue schooling for all (remote and on site). This was in the knowledge that there was no evidence or indication of proximity contact for those not asked to self-isolate, and hence no evidence of heightened risk in our community compared to the period before the positive case was recorded.

Managing this situation is ongoing, as indicated above, and any new development would be different. It is possible that a future case might involve a smaller or larger number of close contacts, depending on the year group affected and the evidence around any affected pupil's movements in and beyond school.

Were that to happen, we would communicate with families in the same swift and clear fashion we were able to this time, and always following the guidance of Public Health England.

Thank you all again for your understanding and support here.

Other Updates from Week 7 (Mon 12 Oct– Friday 16 Oct)

The following are aspects of our routines that have been updated or re-emphasised since last week:

1. **Hygiene and physical distancing.** Please continue to reinforce the importance of hand washing and of maintaining 2m distances whenever and wherever possible.
2. **Face coverings.** Despite regular reminders, a small minority of pupils are not routinely wearing masks in all outdoor as well as indoor contexts where 2m distance is not being maintained. Please do reinforce this message with your children, as we are.
3. **Public Examinations.** Since last week the government have announced the delaying of public examinations in England by three weeks. They will still be completed within our school Summer term time. The knock-on effect in terms of planning and indeed opportunities for our pupils and staff is being actively evaluated by Dr Pope and his team. In the short term, pupils should continue to study and prepare for mocks later this term (5th Year) or in January (Upper Sixth) as normal.
4. **The Co-curriculum.** We continue to review the nature and safety of our co-curricular programme on a weekly basis.
5. **Food.** As a result of ongoing and varied feedback over our food provision, we have decided to set up a pupil survey next week. A letter outlining our plans and providing more in-depth information about how we have been managing the challenges and complexities of feeding the school community safely for staff and pupils alike, this term, has been sent to parents by the Business Director, Mr Topping.
6. **Half Term and beyond.** Please may I urge all families to observe the guidelines that now exist regarding travel and movements over the half term. The pupils and staff of the School need and deserve a rest over half term, when it comes, so that we can all look forward with excitement to a successful return to school at the end of it.

Reflection from the Head

I would like to end this week's bulletin by commending the compassionate positivity and resilience of our community. Firstly, the staff, whose creativity and dynamism remains clear despite the tiredness of the term. I am delighted by the forward-looking ambition they have, not just to see the current situation through, but to develop and evolve the school. Our newly formed steering groups looking at a Sixth Form Diploma programme, and also at Equal Opportunities and Anti-Racism will meet next week. Equally, the pupils, whose positivity is inspiring. In a week that has seen all of the above, we have also witnessed the first meeting of this year's elected School Council, the roll out of our ACHE peer to peer wellbeing support network, and the organisation of a virtual Quiz and Curry night for the lower sixth by our Prefects, amongst other pupil driven initiatives.

Our assemblies this week, from the Rev and I, have focused on mental health including the importance of mutual support, encouragement, and of focusing on what we can do, rather than becoming unnecessarily concerned by what we cannot. Irrespective of Covid-19, our school remains a place of welcome, energy and dynamism, driven by a commitment to support the development and ambitions of our pupils.

Mr A Johnson