

Truro School COVID Steering Group Bulletin No.7 (26 Oct 2020)

The school has had a productive opening half term of the year. Pupils and teachers alike are, I know, looking forward to half term. Many other staff continue to work across school holidays, and I am grateful for everybody's determination, positivity, and resilience in challenging times.

Last summer we planned and put in place Covid-safe measures to minimise risk, whilst also seeking to ensure a return to community life and education. Our restrictions were beyond those required by Public Health England. Our hope was that the national and local picture would improve and we might be able to lessen some of those restrictions. The reality has been the reverse. Despite the fact that we have operated all term with comparatively strict measures in place, we have nonetheless started to see positive Covid cases in school. Given the changing local and national picture this was, perhaps, inevitable. Just today I have contacted parents of the 4th Year and the Lower Sixth separately.

Truro School is committed to keeping our measures under review, however, and this will happen across half term, including with input from the Local Authority Public Health team who I have contacted specifically to invite into our review dialogue.

We cannot predict how the situation nationally or locally will develop, and from the school's perspective, there are variables beyond our gates as well as within them that we will continue to have to respond to, no matter what measures we put in place. Our responses thus far have all been endorsed by Public Health England, who we communicate directly with. Thank you for your ongoing support and understanding too, as you remind your children to act and behave outside school in a way that supports what we are seeking to achieve in school.

I offer my sincere thanks to the families thus far directly affected for acting so responsibly and quickly, to all those isolating as recommended, to my colleagues for still delivering high-quality education and pastoral care under testing and ever-changing conditions, and to all for your forbearance during the evolving reality of this situation.

If a pupil receives notification of a Positive Test during Half Term.

For a Prep pupil positive test, please email Miss Patterson and me, SLP@truroschoo.com and head@truroschoo.com. For a Senior School pupil, please email me and enquiries, head@truroschoo.com and enquiries@truroschoo.com. The email subject title should be 'Positive Covid Test'. In both cases, please let us know how the pupil is, their name, date of birth, year group, form group, the date that covid symptoms first presented, and the best contact number to reach you on. You will then be contacted on or before the next working day by the school.

Track and Trace during Half Term.

The absence of many staff from the school site across the holiday period means that whilst we will support how we can, we cannot lead on any new track and trace responses outside of term time. You are advised, therefore, to contact NHS track and trace during who can lead your son's/daughter's close contact alerts, or you may wish to make that contact directly yourselves.

I will be in touch before the next half of term begins with any updates that will support you and us to prepare for the second half of term.

Updates for Half Term: 24 October – 8 November

<p>1. Review of Covid-Safe procedures. As outlined above, we will undertake review of our Covid-safe procedures this half term. Whilst we know we have operated at a high level of restrictions compared to both the national expectations and many other schools, we recognise the reality that cases have nonetheless happened in our community, and that the local and national picture has worsened since September. Outcomes of that review will be shared with pupils, staff and families alike as term re-starts. Our school site has already been sanitised and fogged since the end of term. We are fortunate to have a two-week half term and there are no plans currently to delay the re-start of term at the end of it.</p>		
<p>2. Bubbles. Our approach to reducing risk of transmission has been to maintain year group bubbles as a default and to track and risk assess any mixed year group contact. The latter is unavoidable in some contexts – siblings from the same family, school transport routes, boarding houses, for example. For older year groups especially, multiple subject combinations are studied across the same cohort, so classroom contacts are unavoidably increased across the group. All additional requests and suggestions for mixed bubbles, including those related to the running of our co-curriculum, continue to be separately reviewed and assessed by our Covid Steering Group. We ask parents to help us minimise these mixed bubbles by, for example, avoiding when possible, car journeys that put children from different families and year groups in the same car.</p>		
<p>3. Mutual Support. May I remind all pupils via parents that contracting Covid is not a choice and is hence not a source of blame. By contrast, engaging in or being associated with cruelty to or about a family or pupil managing Covid (in person or online) is an act of choice, and will be sanctioned accordingly.</p>		
<p>4. Swimming Pools. We have had some enquiries as to when the pools will re-open. After half term we will be using the Prep pool and we will be gradually reopening our Senior site swimming pool too. There, we will start by opening up for our elite swimming clubs and community swims, and both of these groups will receive notifications of the starting dates and times in due course. Our decision making is mindful of commercial realities but is also rooted in a practical and risk assessed approach to the specific running of our pools. Full swimming in the core Senior School timetable continues to be as planned for the Spring term onwards.</p>		
<p>5. Security Cameras. In order to help us tackle occasional and time-consuming acts of small-scale vandalism (such as the throwing of wet paper onto ceilings) in toilets located behind the 6th Form Cafe, we have regrettably decided we must introduce some additional measures. We will be installing a CCTV camera to act as a deterrent. May I reassure parents that this will only cover the communal area of the toilet block. It will not view the urinals or cubicles. Access to footage will be restricted to the Operations Manager and will only be reviewed if there are known incidents which need to be investigated. We regret having to take this step, of course.</p>		
<p>6. Lost Property. One of many areas of school operations we have had to adapt in detail as part of our Covid planning is Lost Property. We have sought to prevent the handling of articles in a way that might be a transmission risk. If a pupil has lost something in the week they are asking about it, they should go and look in the area they left it as that is where it is likely still to be. If they lost it the previous week then they should go to Lost Property. The timings below are published on the door of the Lost Property container. It is not possible to allow parents access to Lost Property at the end of the school day as this represents an enhanced transmission risk for you as much as others. If your children are missing something please remind them of this process and timings.</p>		
Day	1 st & 2 nd Years	3 rd to 6 th Form
Mon	1230-1300	1330-1430
Tue	1230-1300	1330-1430
Wed	1300-1430	1330-1430
Thur	1230-1300	1330-1430
Fri	1230-1300	1330-1430

As I chatted to the last two pupils awaiting collection from the SBA on Friday, I was once again reminded of the strength and understanding of this community, and its resilience. I look forward to being in touch towards the end of what I hope will be a restful half term.

Mr A Johnson