

## Truro School COVID Steering Group Bulletin No.8 (6 Nov 2020)

Thank you for your patience this week. Ahead of the details below, I can inform you that no positive Covid cases amongst pupils or staff have been reported to the school since October 26<sup>th</sup> and all 14-day periods of self-isolation related to the known cases at that time have been completed. This is reassuring ahead of term re-starting on Monday and I thank everybody concerned for their support, including where the necessary actions have caused real inconvenience to families over half term.

The school's leadership teams Across Prep and Senior have been following and seeking to unpack the advice that has been updated daily since the announcement of lockdown last Saturday. What follows here are updates for you and your families. There are three sections of information here:

- **Clarities over how Truro School and Truro School Prep will operate from Monday.**
- **Areas that continue to be under review but will not have changed by Monday.**
- **A summary of the principles and priorities that continue to underpin our decision making.**

This is a necessarily longer bulletin than previously, and my thanks for your close attention to it.

### Clarities for Monday:

1. **Truro School and Truro School Prep will be open to all pupils as planned on Monday.** The usual school bus collections/routes will all be in operation.
2. **Hygiene.** Please keep reinforcing the need for regular and thorough hand washing.
3. **Face Coverings.** In the Senior School, face coverings are now expected to be worn by pupils *at all times on site and in all contexts except for those outlined below*. In these exempted contexts, coverings remain optional for pupils unless requested to be worn by staff. Those requests, when made, will be linked to the activities planned, or to a medical context in the group (pupil and/or staff). The exemptions to face coverings being required are:
  - a. When a pupil is the only person present in a room.
  - b. In taught lessons.
  - c. During other staff supervised activities that involve instruction (such as Games or Clubs).
  - d. Whilst eating lunch.
4. For the avoidance of doubt, therefore, unless a Senior School pupil has an approved clinical exception from having to wear a face covering, they are expected to be worn in all other indoor and outdoor contexts (including year group social spaces, whilst queuing for lunch or moving around the dining areas), except as described above. Pupils will have this message reinforced and explained in Tutorial time next week.
5. In the Prep School, masks for pupils remain optional.
6. Staff will observe the same requirements in their own movement and activity around the site, including in their social spaces. When teaching, formally meeting, or giving instruction, face coverings/visors are a choice for staff if communicating at more than 2m from others, to avoid the need for unnecessarily raised voices (and projection of breath) to combat the muffling effect of a covering/visor. However, whenever engaging with others in any context closer than 2m, a visor or covering is to be worn.

7. **Ventilation.** The importance of regularly ventilating indoor spaces is clear. Rooms used for teaching or socialising will have windows/doors regularly opened as a matter of routine, and will be 'purged' by maximum opening between lessons, across break times, and before/after school. In all double lessons, the lesson will be paused at least once for a ventilation purge.
8. **Clothing.** The above measure may result in rooms being colder. Pupils are encouraged to wear warm undergarments and are free to wear coats, gloves or non-face covering hats over the top of uniform in lessons should they wish. Hoodies are not permitted. On the subject of clothing please note that the Uniform Shop must close during lockdown. You are able to purchase uniform online via their website <https://www.monkhouse.com/pg/11/Store-Locator>. Please stay on this page and scroll down to the On-site School Stores section and you will see Truro School listed.
9. **The Co-Curriculum and after school activities.** Across the duration of lockdown, there will be no fixtures with other schools, and no school-day off-site activities, trips or visits, including as part of the WAA programme. We will, however, continue to run on site educational activities that maintain our broad curriculum, ensure pupils develop wider skills, stay active, and retain our commitment to a strong and varied quality of life for our boarding community.
10. **Swimming.** It was always our intention to re-open the pools after half term if we could, for pupil and community use. They will not be open for community use in lockdown, but year group bubbled use will begin for pupils as part of their education at the school. Details of what is available and when will be shared with pupils next week, including for boarders.
11. **Peripatetic teachers and external coaches.** Truro School will continue to support teaching on our site by our existing appropriately briefed peripatetic staff and external coaches for musical or other activities that meet our Covid-safe thresholds of risk assessment. This will include chorister training that will happen on the school site.
12. **Mixed Year Group Bubbles.** Across the period of lockdown, all but the few necessary mixed year group bubbles will be paused. This pause will apply to mixed sixth form team sports, drama and music rehearsals. Necessary mixed year group bubbles include siblings from the same family attending school, school arranged transport bubbles, our boarding houses, and the Prep after school supervision clubs (in which year groups are also zoned).
13. **Car sharing.** Parents are respectfully reminded not to give lifts to/from school to children from other families who are not living in their household as this creates other bubbles and widens close contact groups in ways the school's track and trace data is unaware of.
14. **Vulnerable pupils.** Any pupil who is classified as Extremely Clinically Vulnerable (ECV) is recommended to remain at home and will receive remote learning and pastoral support during lockdown. Pupils who are Clinically Vulnerable (CV) or who live in households with others who are CV or ECV are expected to attend school as per the government guidelines. The school recognises that this expectation may generate anxiety and is keen to work with any family for whom a separate risk assessment, above the measures outlined here, may support confidence in attendance. Please do contact the relevant Head of Year to begin dialogue over what might be practical.

**15. Food survey outcomes.** During half term we have carried out a review of the Senior site catering and lunch service, which has included feedback from the pupil council, a pupil survey and supplier review. This has resulted in several changes. We have added an additional hot counter to each servery in the dining hall that will rota between pasta and jacket potatoes. The pasta will be a 70/30 mix of tri colour pasta and whole meal pasta. The rice will move to a mix of 70/30 white and brown rice. We have refreshed the menu and included some of the more popular dishes from the survey, including reintroducing lasagne, replacing sweet and sour chicken with katsu chicken and changing the unpopular vegetables with more popular ones. We are making changes to our sourcing to improve quality, such as improved Cornish sausages, and battered fish on Fridays will run alongside breaded oven baked fish and Cornish Sausage. Fresh fruit pots and salad pots will be an everyday option. We will continue to monitor the service and wastage throughout the term and will make amendments as required. We thank the pupils who have provided the feedback into the survey at the end of the last half term.

**16. Communicating Covid related information to school.** From Monday a new Covid Steering Group email address will exist [CSG@truroschoo.com](mailto:CSG@truroschoo.com). From Monday, please use this address to alert us to any specifically Covid related information from home. If that information also relates to absence or other routine areas of school life, please cc to CSG whilst using the regular channels as normal. The CSG email address will be viewed sensitively by a small selection of key staff, including the Head. Information will only be shared more widely from it as required. Any future positive Covid test result notifications should be sent to this email address, cc'ing the Head.

**17. Track and Trace.** We have reviewed and are updating aspects of our track and trace procedures, gaining from our experiences before half term. Alongside the email address identified above, key to these developments is the creation of the post of Covid Officer. This is a new role that is being filled by focusing the remit of our Operations Manager, Mr Fraser. He has been part of the Covid Steering Group all term, knows the school inside out, and is well placed to streamline our track and trace operations. Another planned change is the use of text alerts to families in the event of a need for pupils to return home, which will remain the first response to a new case in a year group reported on a school day, whilst track and trace is enacted to identify close contacts.

**18. Negative Covid test results.** There are two scenarios in which you may receive a negative Covid test. If you have kept your child at home with symptoms and arranged a test, please inform us immediately of the result. If it is negative and they are feeling better, they should return to school. If you have had your child tested as a close contact in isolation, there is no need to inform us of a negative result. They should still complete their isolation. The NHS advice we have had regarding close contact isolation is that 14 days is necessary irrespective of any negative test because symptoms could emerge at any point across the 14 day period, meaning an earlier negative test is not necessarily a guarantee of no infection. If you have any queries about this advice, please contact the NHS directly.

**Further areas that are under ongoing consideration:**

1. **Symptom identification.** Please remain vigilant over Covid type symptoms at home, as we will in school. There has been debate over ways to reduce transmission risks including whether or not we can respond even faster to the presentation of known symptoms – a high temperatures, loss of taste/smell, and a new persistent cough. Infectious periods are known to include the 48 hours before symptoms first present, which is why hygiene, social distancing, face coverings, track and trace, and self-isolation are key. By the time that any symptoms are present, a pupil who has

been in school for the previous 2 days already has close contacts. In addition, our experience of cases has been that initial symptoms did not include one or more of those identified above, and also that the majority of pupils presenting symptoms who were quite rightly and rapidly then tested, have returned negative results. Alertness and response to symptoms is and remains vital, and we will keep this under review.

2. **Bubble sizes.** We are actively looking at ways to reduce bubble sizes that do not undermine educational groups, or close friendships/peer supportive circles, that we see as our responsibility to support on site during lockdown. We are looking at alternative ways to manage registration and tutorial time for Sixth Formers, for example, and will consult with them next week.
3. **Q&A opportunities for parents.** Conscious that I have written often to you but had few chances to meet, I am planning to offer opportunities for parental Q&A by year group either before or after scheduled parents' evenings this term. Further details will follow ahead of each event.

### **Truro School's Principles and Priorities in our Covid Planning:**

The School supports the requirements of the national lockdown to work against the overstretching of local Health services this Winter, recognising that the level of infection in Cornwall remains, currently, comparatively low. The school will operate across the lockdown period as far as possible 'on site only' and with enhancement of the measures adopted thus far.

In September we set up with more robust measures than the national requirements at the time. That did not prevent Covid entering our community, and no measures we can take can guarantee complete protection against a virus that exists across wider society. However, we can and do learn from our experiences. National requirements are now similar to those we have had in place all term, but our approach remains to look for reasonable ways to operate at an enhanced level beyond the minimum expectations, and this document reflects that commitment.

At both Senior and Prep we retain a belief that school should be a social environment promoting mental wellbeing, exercise, and a broad as well as academic education for all. We strive to balance those needs and values alongside the priority to help the community feel safe in a climate of uncertainty. This next phase of term sees that balance move further towards restrictions during lockdown, but the retention of our culture and ethos as we learn to live and work with the uncertainties of Covid remains a priority.

We value and respect the expertise and wellbeing of our teaching and non-teaching staff, as well as of our pupils and their families. I have great admiration and respect for staff (and workers elsewhere) who are committed to being at work at a time when most of the nation have been requested to work from home. Measures in place and expectations of behaviour from children and adults alike are also designed to ensure staff can be passionate about educating at the same time as being responsible to themselves and their own families.

Before I started as Head of this great School, I was fortunate to have been able to observe from afar the resilience, creativity, and collaborative values of the Truro School family during the last lockdown. What I witnessed fed my ambition and enthusiasm to be here in this role. As we enter a second, different lockdown, I believe in this community's ability to triumph over this latest challenge, together. As always, we will keep our measures under regular review, and I will continue to communicate changes or updates in our position to you.

**Mr A Johnson**