

Truro School COVID Steering Group Bulletin No.9 (13 Nov 2020)

Thank you, and your children, for your and their overwhelming support this week for the enhanced safety measures that we have requested in response to lockdown. I recognise that much of what is being required is not what any of us would like to be doing, which makes my gratitude all the more sincere. At Truro School we continue to support on site and face to face education, co-education, and social interaction for all pupils whenever and however we can, and interactive remote teaching and pastoral support when we cannot. We also recognise and respect the needs of those staff and pupils within our family who have heightened personal or household vulnerabilities in a Covid context, and who with my great admiration, remain committed to teaching and learning at this time.

I would also like to thank all those involved as planners, participants, or remote congregation, in our Remembrance service on Wednesday. It was an honour and a privilege to be part of an event of such dignity, and one that reminded us all of the values of compassion, service and fortitude at heart of our school family.

Covid Steering Group Updates from Week 8 (9 – 13 November):

1. **Hygiene.** Please, as always, keep reinforcing the need for regular and thorough hand washing.
2. **Face Coverings.** In the Senior School, the wearing of face coverings as a default has calmed anxieties for the majority of the community this week and it will remain the expectation across the lockdown period. We are also aware that for a minority of pupil it is proving challenging – glasses wearers, for example. We do not wish to create new risks (of accident, for example) and I would invite any pupil or parent of a pupil, for whom the new expectations are creating particular anxieties or risks to contact their form tutor. We are happy to approve exceptions where not doing so undermines safety or wellbeing, as well as to discuss or approve alternatives (such as visors, if preferred). Our default for the whole community will remain face coverings as a way to support friends to socialise at school at a time when they cannot do so in person off site, something that must happen for their wellbeing in breaks and lunchtimes. It is something we know would be impossible for the children to consistently do maintaining 2m at all times, an alternative that would also be impossible for staff to enforce in all places and at all times.
3. **Behaviour.** Amidst the dominance of excellent behaviour, we have had some reports of a few, mainly younger pupils, deliberately huddling or otherwise making physically contact with each other when unsupervised. The invincibility or defiance of youth is to be applauded in some contexts, but not this one. We are asking pupils not to do this and will stop it when it is seen.
4. **Track and Trace.** We are grateful for the small number of families who have informed us of Covid tests or cases in their households, using the new CSG@truroschoo.com email address. This will be an ongoing inevitability this winter. As I write, all tests this week that we are aware of and that have reached results have either returned negative outcomes, or have involved positive household cases that have had no implications in terms of close contact tracing amongst pupils who have been on site this week. Mr Fraser, in his role as Covid Officer, has been completing pre-emptive track and trace from existing school data ahead of some results. We will continue this

approach so that if or when a positive case is returned, we can ensure that the close contact lists can be finalised within the first school day of notification.

5. **Self-isolation.** Please can I remind all families that where any member of your household is awaiting a Covid test result that has been taken because they have presented symptoms, the whole household should be in isolation until the result is clear. In practice this means that siblings of a child who is awaiting a test result because they have had symptoms should not be attending school until a negative result is reached. If the result is positive, the whole household clearly remains in isolation for the NHS advised duration.
6. **NHS Track and Trace App.** It is not school policy or expectation that pupils have this app, but if they do, and it requests them to self-isolate, they must do so, seeking NHS advice if any notification is unclear.
7. **Ventilation.** We are pleased with the way pupils and staff have adapted to the wearing of warmer clothing as we seek to increase ventilation indoors. We are now looking at ways of enhancing the ventilation in the dining areas as well.
8. **Swimming.** It has been a delight to have swimming on both sites this week. Thank you for your patience as we continue to roll the programme out for all across this term and next.
9. **Public Examinations 2021.** Parents of pupils in the 5th and Upper Sixth Years will be aware that GCSE and A Level examination in Wales were cancelled this week. This is not the case in England and there is no indication that it will be. Please reassure your children that the best thing they can do is to continue to prepare for examinations, managing what they are in control of, which is, fundamentally, their approach to study. For the 5th Years that means a focus on this term's Mocks. For the Upper Sixth that means January Mocks. Outcomes in these exams are important for all the normal reasons – as opportunities to gain feedback on progress/strengths/weaknesses. The marks/grades may be used as part of any future contingency should summer exams be threatened, but that will not be in isolation and without wider academic data. For example, the school is actively planning for follow up assessments at the end of the Spring Term or at the start of the Summer. The nature and timing of these will be finalised once the government and Ofqual have given their guidance over summer contingencies, which we expect before Christmas, and communicated to families at that point. In the meantime, please do keep reassuring your children that we are here to teach, advise and support them, and that they should focus on what they can influence in the knowledge that we will support them in response to anything that changes.
10. **Sixth Form Bubble sizes.** We continue to look at ways to reduce Sixth Form bubble sizes via approaches to registration and tutorials, in a way that will not undermine educational groups, or close friendships circles. I would also remind the Upper Sixth that they are able to sign out to leave the site early if they have a free last lesson to reduce congestion at the end of the day. This is a privilege we will extend to the lower sixth from Monday during the lockdown period too.
11. **Parents' Evenings and Q&A with the Head.** Thank you for the positive feedback about our first remote Parents' Evening. The answers to questions presented to me in my Q&A session have been incorporated into this bulletin.

Mr A Johnson