



20<sup>th</sup> November 2020

Dear Parents/carers

Although this is a further piece of correspondence in an already busy week I felt it was important to continue with my weekly update to all families. As is usual, the contents are divided into different sections for ease of reference.

### **Queries over school action related to isolation periods**

I have received some questions about the process behind decisions to isolate whole year groups or specific students. I am conscious that this can result in heightened anxiety levels and on occasions unhelpful rumours being spread, sometimes on social media. As always, I would ask that parents contact me directly rather than speculate in this way.

For context, when we receive notice of a positive case of Covid 19 in school (for students or staff) the first step is to work out who that person has come into contact with. We look at where they were sat in class, (referencing the seating plan), whether any specialist lessons have taken place which may have raised the number of people they have come into contact with and where they spent their social time. Every case is then discussed in detail and a decision is reached whether it is a whole year group or a selected group that need to isolate. It is absolutely not the case that we act differently with examination year groups like Y11 or Y13. The same process applies to all.

Where it is perceived that different rules are being applied it might be because a student is asked to isolate not because of whom they have been in contact when in school, but who they have been in contact with outside of school.

Unfortunately rules of confidentiality mean we cannot discuss or give examples of individual cases. Please trust that there is a strict process in place which is followed diligently whenever we receive notice of a positive case.

The pdf that has been shared with families on the website does help with the expectations of isolation which you can access here <https://www.nailseaschool.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Covid19-Household-Isolation-Timings.pdf>

### **Current safety measures in place and the need to work together**

Having communicated with Matt Lenny, Director of Public Health at North Somerset, this week he has confirmed the school is continuing to do all it can to protect staff and students. He reiterated the importance of the need for all families to adhere to the national lockdown expectations (in place until 2<sup>nd</sup> December). He added:

'North Somerset residents are catching coronavirus from different places in the community, which means it is just as likely to get the virus from family and friends as in a school or workplace. Individuals should think about every setting and every interaction with others as a potential source of infection, but one that we can help prevent through following the basic hands, face and space rules. This is why it is vital that you follow the national lockdown guidelines and stay home as much as you can'

Within school our key control measures include students sitting in designated seating areas and staff and students wearing masks at times when social distancing is more difficult. I would like to thank students for responding so positively to this.

Students should be entering the school building, irrespective of their year group entrance, wearing a face mask. Students who arrive at school without a mask will be provided with a reusable one from a stock purchased by the school. Students will be charged £2.00 for this, with the money being deducted from funds currently on the student card.

Heads of year are collating the names of students who are exempt from wearing a mask so that staff across the school are aware. I would ask that parents notify the relevant Head of Year if this applies to their son/daughter.

Students MUST continue to sit in their designated seat, whether they have their usual teacher or any cover teacher. An incident of students swapping seats in a cover lesson this week resulted in contact being made with a student needing to isolate when they did not need to do so. In the same instance there was a further delay in notifying the student that had to isolate. I would ask parents to reinforce the importance of this measure at home.

### **Use of supply teachers within school**

Following the earlier updates this week I have received a number of queries from parents about the deployment of supply staff within school. I do appreciate parents contacting me directly as open communication is something I place high on the list in my everyday practice. Staff absence has increased this term for a variety of reasons. Some staff, as you are aware have tested positive for Covid-19. Others have to self-isolate for issues unrelated to those that have happened in school. Another group of staff not in school are also having to take childcare days for their children who are having to isolate from their own schools.

In order to try and continue to function, schools can employ supply staff to cover, this has caused some anxiety from students and concerns raised by parents. As part of our regular review of the risk assessment we are re-evaluating if we use supply staff at all. The consequence of this, of course, could be in the future that we do not have enough staff on site to operate whilst keeping students safe based on staff/student ratios.

These decisions are ones that I would not want to have to make but, as you can appreciate, overall the call needs to be made that ensures students are safe. It could be that having to ask a year group to work at home for a day or two as a result of staff absence is something

that is preferred as opposed to a year group having to isolate for a 14 day period if the actions of a non-Nailsea member of staff leads to this decision having to be made.

### **Parent access on school site**

Publication of the additional measures on 4<sup>th</sup> November – see here

<https://www.nailseaschool.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Additional-measures-Families-Nov-2020.pdf> stated the importance of parents not coming onto site to drop off/seek meetings with staff.

This is a key way to stop transmission of the virus and so it was disappointing to see a number of parents arrive on site this week to pass on various things to their children, (lunch box/coat etc) who would then have to cross bubbles to collect them. I would like to reiterate the importance of this measure being adhered to by parents. Reception staff have been asked not to allow unplanned visitors onto site. Thank you in advance for understanding the importance of this additional measure.

### **Notifying school about symptoms/test results**

We have set up a dedicated email address [C19@nailseaschool.com](mailto:C19@nailseaschool.com) that should be used to inform us when any students are going for a test/waiting for a test/receive outcomes of a test.

When discussing the situation with Public Health representatives they always ask the following information which it would be useful for parents to include in this notification email, namely

- When symptoms were first noted
- The list of symptoms that were experienced

As a reminder if any member of the household has symptoms, is going for a test and when waiting for a test result, the entire household needs to isolate until the results are known.

### **Mock exams – Yr 11 and 13**

The mock exam period begins for both sets of students on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> November. I wish all of the students well as they enter this period. Please be assured that if any students are in the position of not being in school during this period an alternative method of completing the papers will be put in place. This will be determined on a case by case basis as needed.

### **Finally....**

...this is now month eight of students, parents and staff operating in a very different educational world. We, home and school, are continuing to do the very best we can to ensure that things remain as normal as possible. Working together will make this even more likely to be successful. Thank you for your ongoing efforts and collaboration.

This week was also the week, at the end of lunchtime on Tuesday, I slipped up quite stupendously in the corridor in the year 10 bubble. As I type, I can feel the bruises emerging on my elbow and leg – rest assured, I can confirm the floor is definitely concrete. As I sat there on the floor, in the puddle from the water fountain water, I was absolutely mortified. However, with four staff quickly leaving their staff base to come to help and the year 10 students who had witnessed this looking more concerned than wanting to laugh (must have been tricky not to!) I soon remembered the reason why I love coming to work here everyday. #teamnailsea really are something special.

Wishing you all the best for a restful weekend.

Take care and be kind

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dee Elliott". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above a thin horizontal line.

Mrs Dee Elliott  
Head teacher